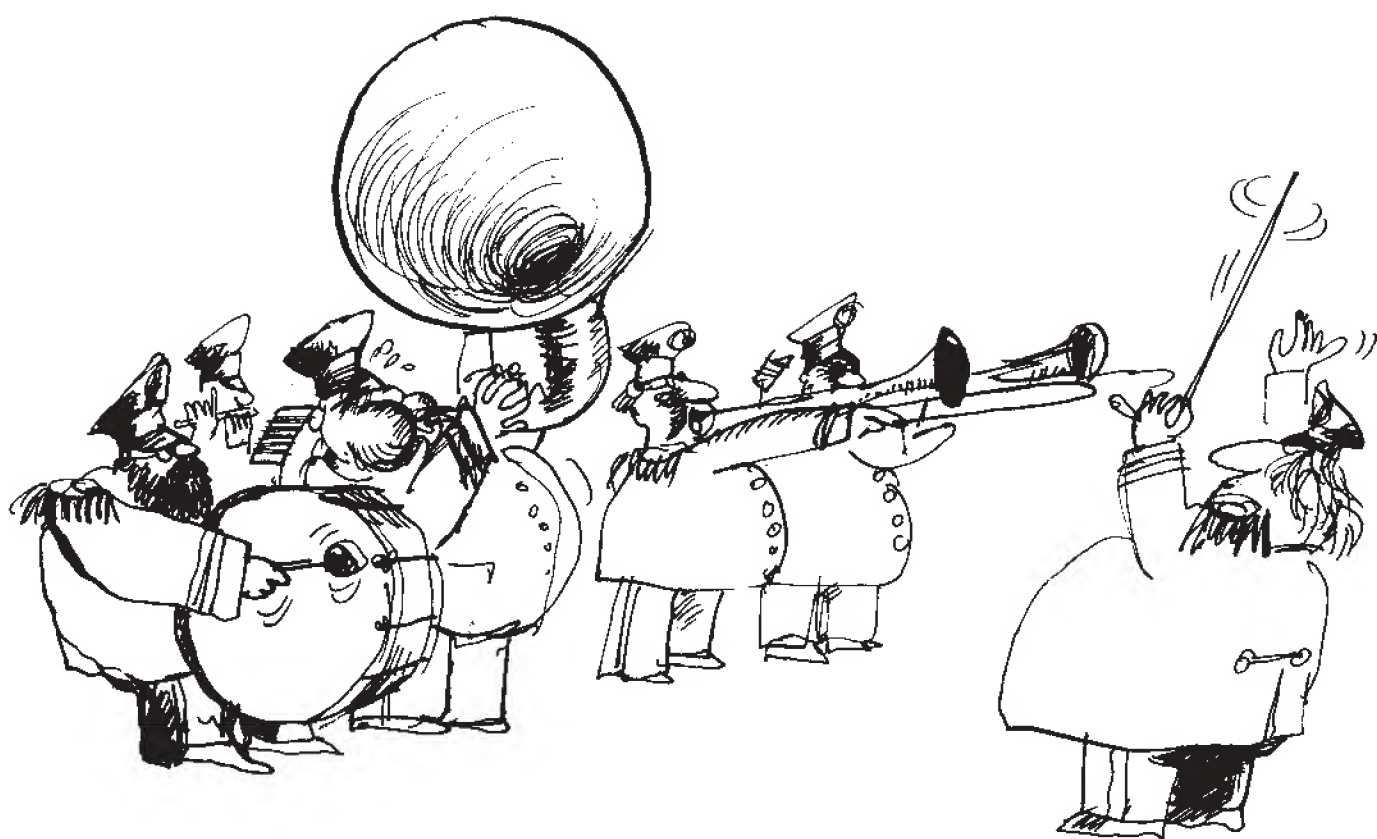




One fine summer's day...

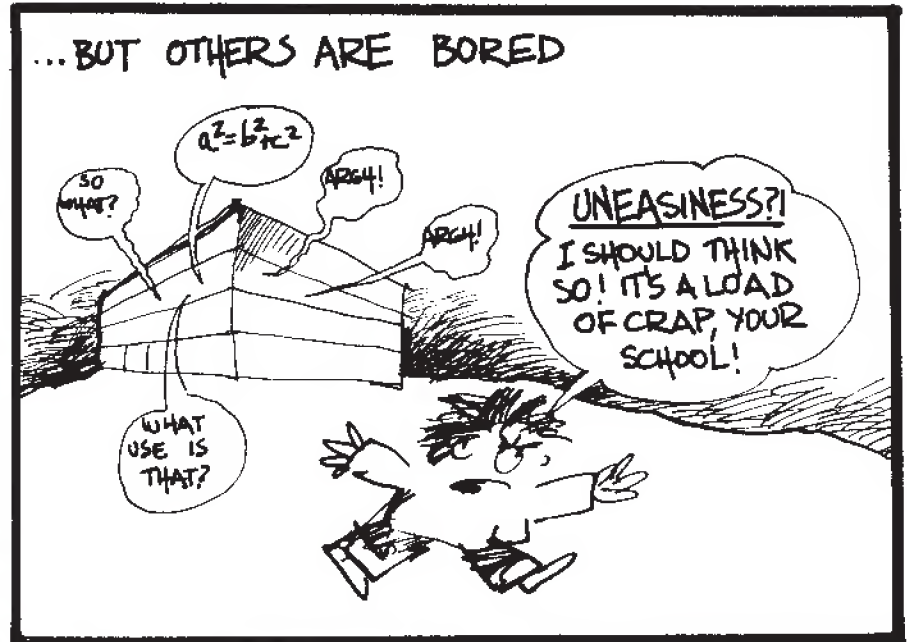


... and yet

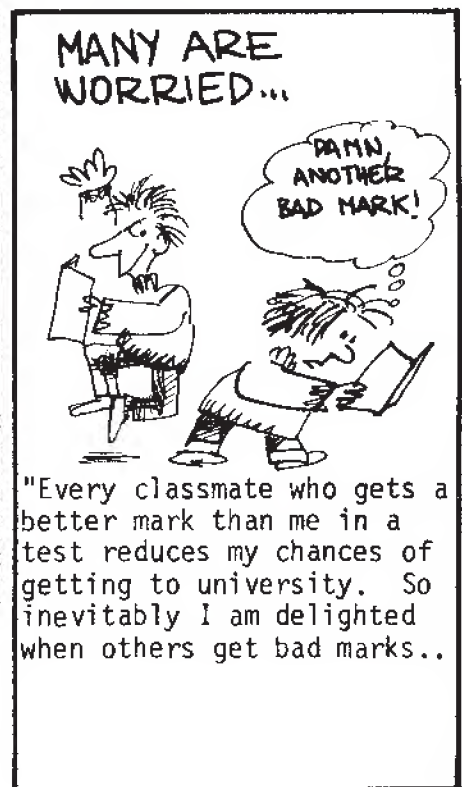


there seems to be some uneasiness...

Uneasiness among the pupils



...OR ON THEIR SCHOOLMATES...



ARE WORRIED..



"On the first day of school, the teacher told us that more than one-third would fail the year; he said this was proven by statistics."

...ARE SO WORRIED THAT IT MAKES THEM ILL

The school is also an institution which unbalances those most prone to psychosomatic disorders. The state of nervous tension in which they are kept by oral tests, compositions, examinations, the discipline of certain autocratic teachers, the shortage of physical activities and fresh air, the threats of demanding parents, and also the excessive desire of some children to do well, finally causes in many pupils chronic anxiety which affects the proper functioning of the internal organs. Quite apart from bedwetting of preschool-family origin, which may be abnormally prolonged by situations which repeatedly cause anxiety, there are many cases of headaches, digestive troubles, colitis, cardiac erethism and dermatitis which miraculously disappear during the holidays.

In fact, there is a risk in putting children day after day, into situations which take a heavy toll on the nerves. In the long run, the system becomes exhausted and reacts less and less well to emotional demands, internal lesions and "adaptive illnesses" may occur, preventing the pupil from reacting flexibly to new situations. The disastrous effects of these states on performance at school will be obvious to everyone.

BASTIN (1)

SOME
ONLY ASK
TO
LEAVE
SCHOOL

He wanted to be a cook, he was interested in that. He had a job prospect, starting immediately, friends of the family who were expecting him... He was furious that he still had two years of school to complete, during which he would do absolutely nothing :

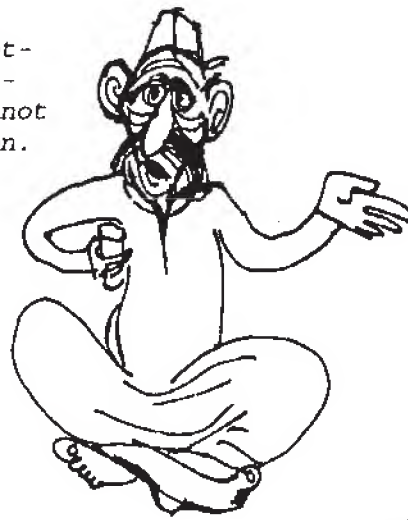
"Two years sitting on my backside! You think they aren't prize idiots ?

"Because for the moment, all right, I don't mind a slog. But if it's still available in two years I shan't feel like doing a damned thing anymore... You know what I mean ? It may be that in two years, as I won't have started, I may no longer want to be a cook or anything else...

DUNETON (2)

Uneasiness among the parents

Parents are terrified at the prospect of their children getting bad marks. They feel constantly guilty that they are not giving the child any attention.



THERE WAS SUCH DISCIPLINE IN OUR TIMES ! NO ONE DARE SPOKE. TEACHERS SHOULD ENFORCE TIGHT CONTROL !

BAD MARKS IN MATHEMATICS YET AGAIN !

YOU KNOW HE WAS NEVER INTERESTED IN MATHS !

HE WILL ONLY TILL LAND LIKE HIS FATHER



HOW OFTEN MUST YOU BE TOLD NOT TO GO OUT BEFORE FINISHING YOUR HOMEWORK !

CAN I GO OUT AT MIDNIGHT IN THAT CASE ?



Plans and programmes are made by people from elite classes.



I say that you can't go against nature; my daughter doesn't like to be shut up, she could work day and night and she still wouldn't succeed.

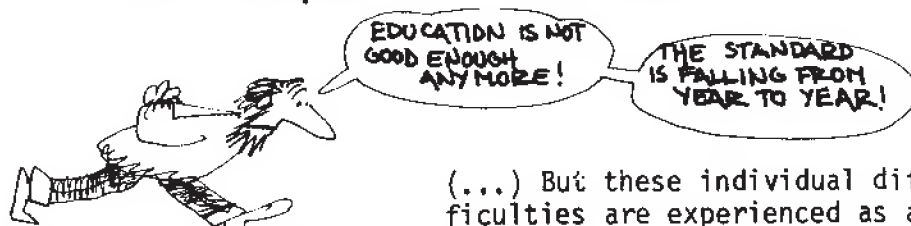


Uneasiness among teachers

SOME ARE SATISFIED...



...BUT OTHERS ARE WORRIED



" In former times the classroom was the secret place where the teacher asserted his authority.

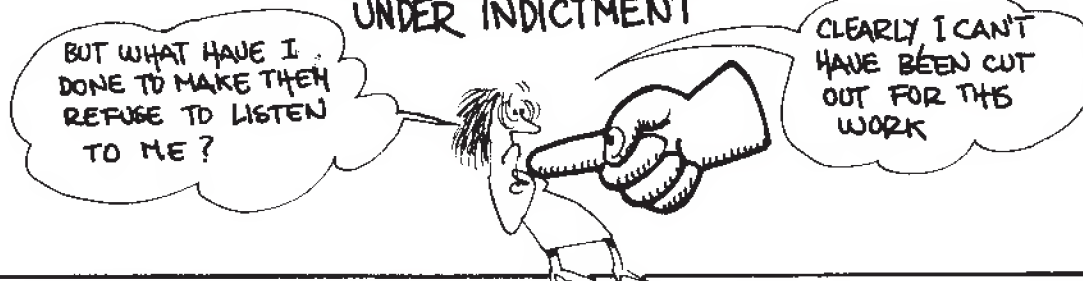
(...) The interplay of ideas between pupil and teacher was quite intense, quite rich and quite fruitful, so that the teacher felt intimately and profoundly fulfilled by it.

(...) Hence one can imagine the shock-waves caused by the crisis in the teacher-pupil relationship. First of all, at the level of the individual, the classroom is viewed with apprehension (by the teacher): it is no longer the place where you feel your own worth and achieve fulfilment as you meet the expectations of the pupils; instead, it is where culture is ignored or rejected and the teacher's contribution disputed.

(...) But these individual difficulties are experienced as a crisis of the system, and this is where the seriousness of the problem lies. There have always been teachers who did not succeed in arousing their pupils' interest; they were sometimes heckled. They didn't broadcast the fact, for it was obvious to everyone that it was their own fault. Today teachers speak quite freely of their difficulties with their pupils: they no longer think of them as a personal failure but as proof that the educational model has not been adapted to the situation; in their view, they are being asked to do something which is no longer meaningful, which cannot be effective any more and can therefore only lead them into a blind alley. The profession as practised only fifteen years ago has become unworkable.



FEEL THAT THEY ARE UNDER INDICTMENT



... WONDER



... ACCUSE

WHOSE FAULT IS IT?
OURS?
THE PUPILS?
THE PROGRAMMES?



(...) Absenteeism (on the part of schoolteachers) depends to a great extent on the schools. It is also a symptom and, in a way, a consequence of the 'uneasiness'. For some teachers, it is a reaction of flight in the face of the challenge of the classroom, which has become too great. And doctors state that even some vocational illnesses are subconscious defences against a profession which is thought to be quite intolerable.

One cannot claim to be apolitical when one agrees to take on the task of sorting out the sheep from the goats, the workers from the bosses. We have not been told about it, but the teaching profession has completely changed over the past fifteen years or so. We were kept inside buildings, classrooms, walls, while everything around us was changing: society, life, values, the children and ourselves ... We go on using rules and structures designed -- very well designed, I repeat -- for teaching in the old days. It doesn't work, obviously. For the children or for us. Of course we try to hang on, to invent systems for ourselves. We change the arrangement of the tables in the classroom, we put our desks behind the pupils, at the back, at the side ... We brighten up the walls with engravings, posters ... We get up to increasingly complex tricks, which we call pedagogy, in order to appear scholarly, reassure ourselves and give ourselves some 'bite' ... It's killing us. And the whole fine structure just keeps on collapsing from year to year: the children become more and more disobedient, troublesome, inattentive, ignorant -- by our standards -- of beauty, and thus susceptible to social selection. And we become more and more disgusted.

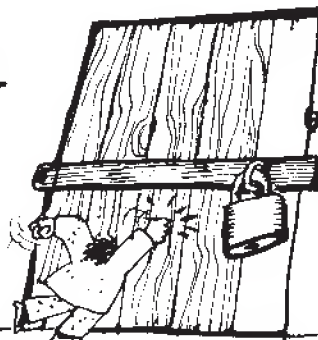
(...) In short, there is a crisis in the profession itself. It is not surprising that some react by fleeing from this profession, which has become impossible to practise in outmoded conditions: requests for secondment to the "National Centre for Tele-Education" (the traditional outlet for teachers who are ill or tired) are increasingly being received from young and respected teachers. At the same time, the somewhat mythical intention of changing to another profession can be seen to be spreading among the teaching community.

SUPPORT
JOKE (5)

FOR SOME THIS IS BECOMING INTOLERABLE



THOSE WHO TRY TO CHANGE ENCOUNTER OBSTACLES OF ALL SORTS (*)

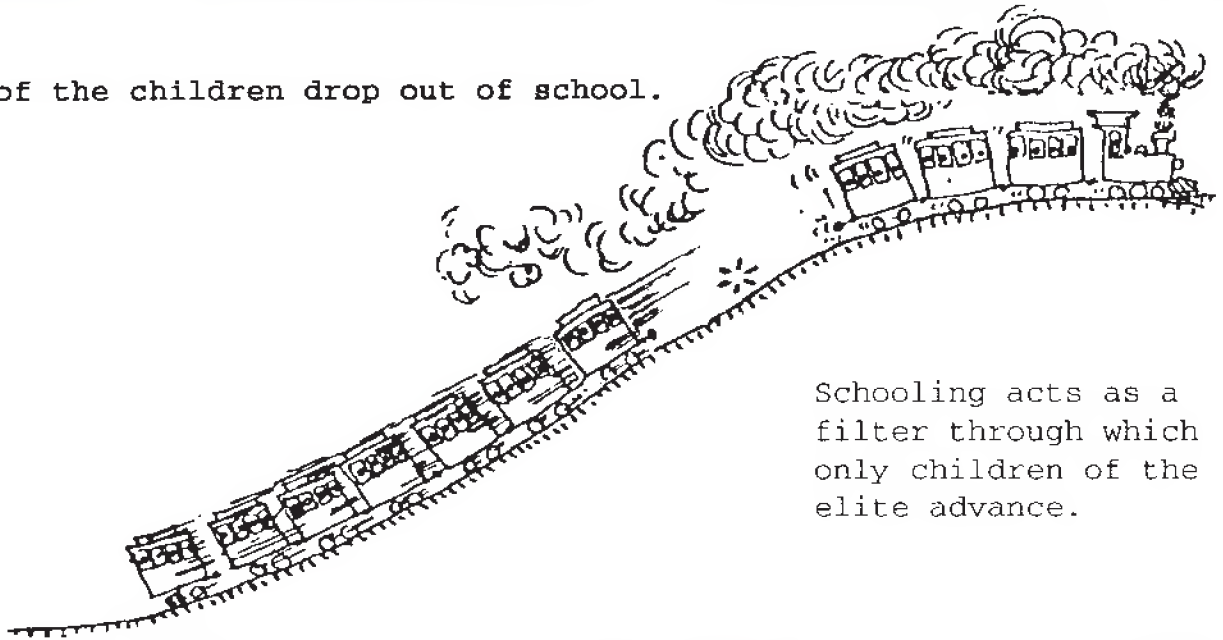


(*) OPPOSITION FROM SOME COLLEAGUES, SOME ADMINISTRATIONS, SOME PARENTS...

A great many failures

A SCHOOL IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTION, QUALIFICATIONS, DIPLOMAS -- IN REALITY, THE YEARS AT SCHOOL PRODUCE A STRIKING NUMBER OF FAILURES.

Most of the children drop out of school.



Schooling acts as a filter through which only children of the elite advance.

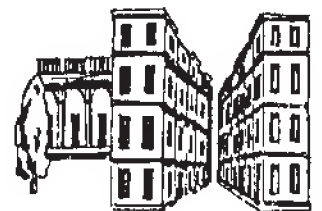
Out of every 100 children in India



50-60 enter primary schools. Out of these, about 30-40 soon drop out.

20-25 enter middle school. Of these, a further 10-15 drop out.

5-10 enter higher secondary schools. Of these a further 4-6 drop out.



40-50 do not enrol in schools at all.

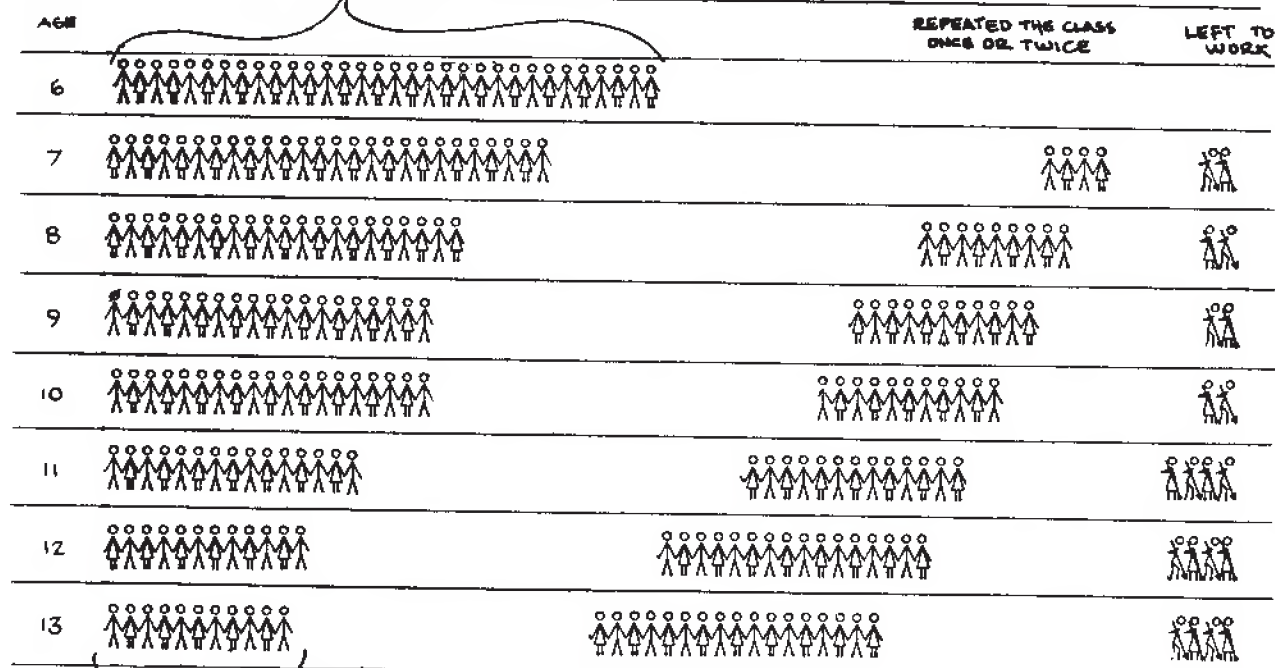


Only 1-2 children eventually enter college.

CHILDREN HAVE TO REPEAT CLASSES FROM THE EARLIEST YEARS AND THROUGHOUT THEIR SCHOOLING.

Italy

OF 32 CHILDREN WHO STARTED SCHOOL



... SEVEN YEARS LATER ONLY 11 HAVE NOT REPEATED A YEAR

As the study of children at Barbiana, carried out over a period of 8 years, shows: school "wastage" (repeating classes and leaving to work) is progressively affecting two-thirds of pupils.

BARBIANA (7)

THE NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO HAVE TO REPEAT A CLASS VARIES FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY, BUT DESPITE A DECLINING TREND, IT IS STILL HIGH.

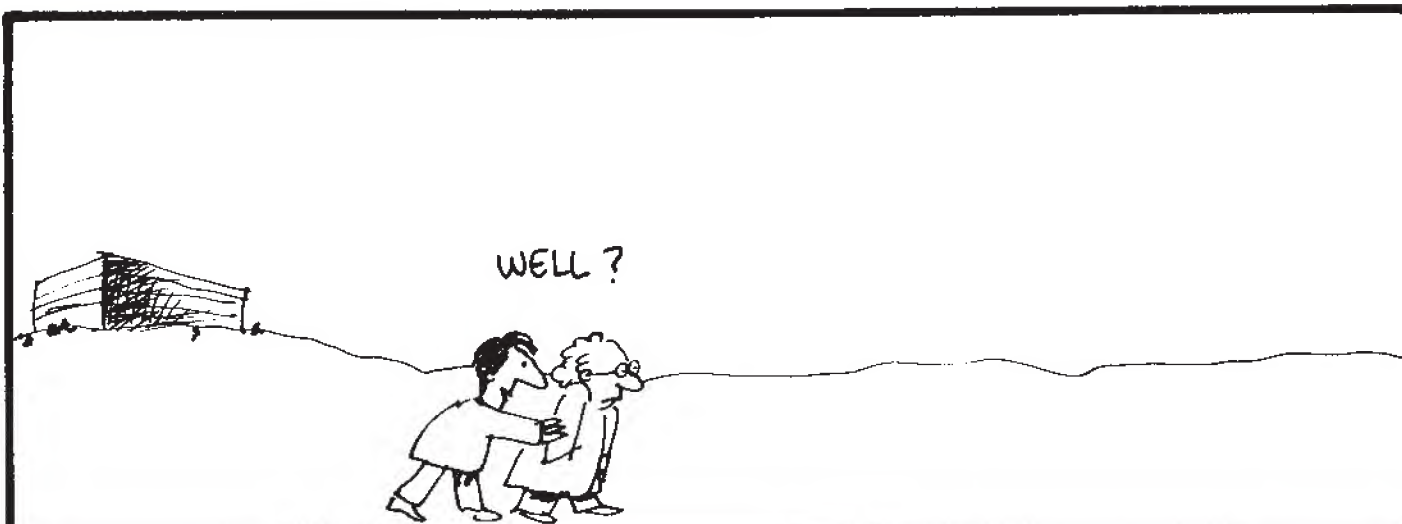
Switzerland

Geneva (1974) :
More than a third of 14-year old children are not in the class appropriate for their age.

Germany

A quarter of the pupils at intermediate school (Hauptschule), half the pupils in higher grades (Realschule)

and practically all pupils at grammar school have to repeat a class at least once. (1976)



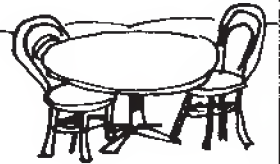
WELL, WHAT?
ALL THESE GOOD
INTENTIONS...
THESE HIGH-FLOWN
SENTIMENTS...



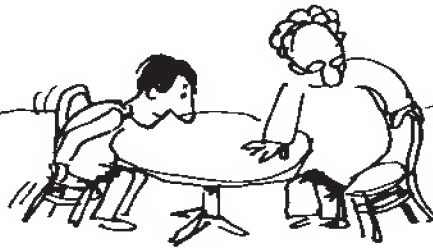
THESE FINE
OBJECTIVES...
ALL THESE
HOPES...
THIS GRAND
TALK...



YOU'VE SEEN
THE STATISTICS...
IS THAT
WHAT IT ALL LEADS TO?
FAILURES, DISSATISFACTION,
BITTERNESS,
UNEASINESS...



WHY IS THERE
ALL THAT?



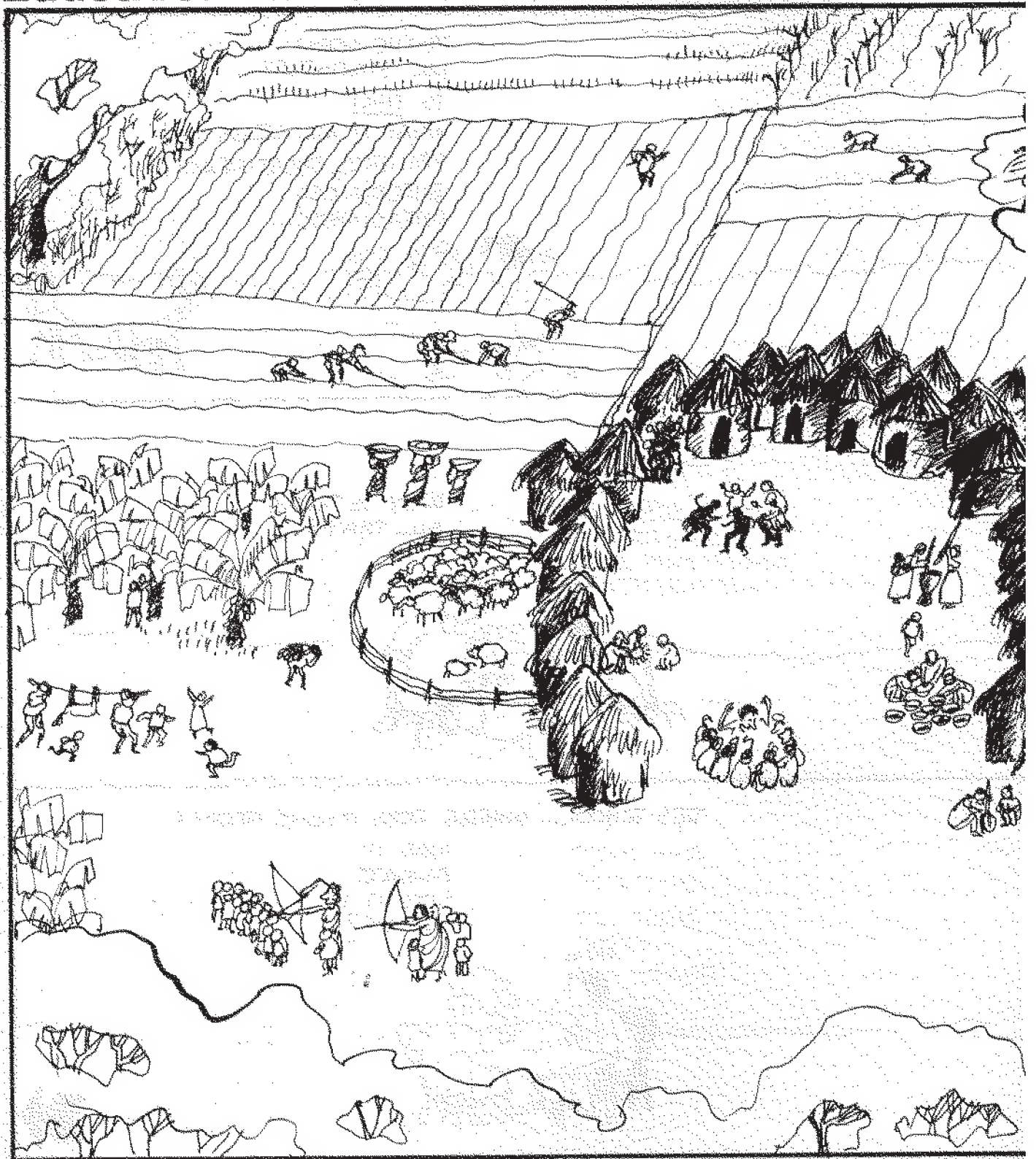
THIS SCHOOL... WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

WAS IT
ALWAYS
LIKE IT IS
TODAY?

NO...



Education without schools





LEARNING DOES NOT TAKE PLACE ONLY IN SCHOOLS. Several communities of forest dwellers, for instance, do not require schools as we know them.

For example, in such societies, living the life of the community, working in the fields, listening to the tribal elders, playing one's part in group ceremonies -- THAT IS SELF-EDUCATION.

People in such societies acquire tools for work; values and modes of behaviour are absorbed, and the environment as a whole provides a PERMANENT FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING.

Unschooling people are as intelligent, creative and competent as those who have gone to school. A tribal may be able to categorize hundreds of thousands of plants in a forest with greater facility than a botany professor in a university.

Indigenous schooling in India

In settled, older civilizations like those of India, there was a good deal of formal schooling. Impressions of the availability of schooling circulated by English historians are now known to be seriously flawed. The most elaborate account of schooling systems in eighteenth century India, for instance, is now available in Dharampal's masterpiece, *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth Century*.

William Adam had observed in his First report (1935) that there seemed to be about 100,000 village schools in Bengal and Bihar around the 1830's. A few years earlier, another Englishman, G.L. Prendergast had stated that in the newly extended Presidency of Bombay "there is hardly a village, great or small, throughout our territories, in which there is not at least one school, and in larger villages more." Thomas Munro affirmed this point of view when he reported in 1812-1813 that "every village has a school". Dr G.W. Leitner observed as late as 1882 that the spread of education in the Punjab around 1850 was of a similar extent.

In his book, Dharampal discusses these reports. He also makes a comprehensive study of archival materials relating particularly to what was then known as the Presidency of Madras.

He concludes that the indigenous system of education at the end of the eighteenth century compared more than favourably with the system obtaining in England at about the same time, in respect of the number of schools and colleges proportionate to the population, the number of students in school and college, the diligence as well as the intelligence of students, the quality of teachers, the financial support provided from public and private sources, the high percentage of lower class (Sudras) compared to upper class (Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya) students, and the range of subjects taught (*See table on facing page*).

However, this indigenous system was soon allowed to deteriorate and in its place, following T.B. Macaulay's famous Minute on Instruction, the colonialists installed a system that was designed to basically provide clerks for the administration of the empire.

It is therefore important here to investigate how the European school itself originated because that school became the model for ours.

| CASTE-WISE PERCENTAGE OF MALE SCHOOL STUDENT | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|-------|-------|--------------|---------|
| District | Brahmin | HINDOOS | | Sudra | Other castes | Muslims |
| | | Chetris Rajahs | Vysee | | | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | |
| Oriya Speaking | | | | | | |
| GANJAM | 27.25 | -- | 8.24 | 33.76 | 29.88 | 0.91 |
| Telugu Speaking | | | | | | |
| VIZAGAPATAM | 46.16 | 1.09 | 10.44 | 21.24 | 20.03 | 1.03 |
| RAJAHMUNDRY | 34.49 | -- | 24.91 | 17.78 | 20.83 | 1.98 |
| MASULIPATAM | 33.13 | 0.36 | 21.94 | 29.82 | 9.30 | 5.44 |
| GUNTOOR | 40.53 | -- | 20.70 | 25.23 | 10.17 | 3.37 |
| NELLORE | 32.61 | -- | 21.70 | 31.83 | 5.71 | 8.16 |
| CUDDAPAH | 24.03 | -- | 29.07 | 30.13 | 10.98 | 5.79 |
| Kannada Speaking | | | | | | |
| BELLARY | 18.01 | -- | 14.91 | 45.56 | 17.84 | 3.69 |
| SERINGAPATAM | 7.83 | -- | 3.75 | 48.61 | 25.77 | 14.02 |
| Malayalam Speaking | | | | | | |
| MALABAR | 18.64 | -- | 0.70 | 30.90 | 23.04 | 26.72 |
| Tamil Speaking | | | | | | |
| NORTH ARCOT | 9.60 | -- | 8.66 | 66.76 | 7.40 | 7.59 |
| SOUTH ARCOT | 9.57 | -- | 3.55 | 76.19 | 8.27 | 2.42 |
| CHINGLEPUT | 12.75 | -- | 6.30 | 71.47 | 6.72 | 2.76 |
| TANJORE | 16.16 | 2.12 | 1.27 | 61.17 | 13.92 | 5.32 |
| TRICHNOPOLY | 11.76 | -- | 2.25 | 76.00 | 3.23 | 6.77 |
| MADURA | 8.67 | -- | 8.18 | 52.99 | 21.77 | 8.39 |
| TINNEVELLY | 21.78 | -- | -- | 31.21 | 38.42 | 8.60 |
| COIMBATORE | 11.30 | -- | 3.56 | 78.52 | 2.78 | 3.84 |
| SALEM | 10.75 | -- | 7.59 | 39.15 | 32.38 | 10.12 |
| MADRAS | | | | | | |
| (i) Ordinary Schools | 7.01 | -- | 15.44 | 68.62 | 6.13 | 2.80 |
| (ii) Charity Schools | 12.56 | -- | 11.11 | 41.55 | 32.37 | 2.42 |

Table source: Dharampal, *The Beautiful Tree, Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*. Pp. 441; Price Rs.400
Published by: A.V.P. Publishers, P.B. No.7102, Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore 641 045.

The school of the gentry

It was in the Middle Ages that education in Europe became the PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOL.

This meant that an entire class of people (mostly members of the clergy) specialized in

transmitting knowledge and that this transmission took place in an artificial context, carefully isolated from the world of adults and cut off from daily life.





Over the centuries, these schools were to be reserved for the elite.

At first for the nobility, and later also for the bourgeoisie, which, as they grew in importance, came to claim the same privileges as the aristocracy.

The "others" -- peasants, workers, humble people -- were left with only practical

learning in and through their daily work.

The school of the gentry respected tradition and attached central importance to morals and religion, verbal skills and abstract thought. Scientific knowledge which could bring change counted less than rhetoric and Latin, the symbols of a tradition that had to be maintained in a world which was thought to be unchanging.

This bookish, refined and literary culture was in harmony with the pupils' background and met their aspirations.

For the inheritors of an aristocracy that was certain that its power would last forever, getting an education was synonymous with learning to think, to conduct oneself well, to BE A LORD AND MASTER.

"In any civilized society, there are necessarily two classes of men: one which makes its living by manual labour, the other which lives on the income from its properties or the product of certain functions in which mental work predominates over physical labour. The first is the working class; the second I shall call the learned class.

Men of the working class soon need the labour of their children; and the children themselves need, at an early stage, to acquire knowledge of, and particularly familiarity with the customs of, the arduous work for which they are destined. They cannot therefore languish long in schools (...)

By contrast, those of the learned class can devote time to their studies, for they have more to learn in order to fulfil their destiny, including things which can only be learned when age has given the mind a certain level of development (...)

These are matters which are not governed by human will; they necessarily derive from the very nature of men and society: no one is capable of changing them ... We must start from invariables (...)

We may thus conclude that in any State in which proper attention is devoted to the education of citizens there must be two entire systems of instruction which have nothing in common with each other."

Destutt de Tracy (1802)

**One school
for the rich,
one
for the poor**



The schools of the gentry were to remain as long as the rigid and hierarchical structures of the feudal world were not yet rendered anachronistic by the development of industrial capitalism.

The revolution in technology along with the invention of the machine and the use of new sources of energy, changed the landscape of the world completely. New social classes emerged: an industrial middle class, master of technological progress, took over the power of the agrarian aristocracy; a working class was created through the concentration of poor and unqualified labourers around the new centres of production.

In this world in transition.

schools remained the reserve of the elite. But faced with the economy's new need for technical and scientific qualifications, the contents of teaching underwent fundamental changes. The schools had to modernize.

The scientific disciplines took on a growing importance alongside the literary and classical fields.

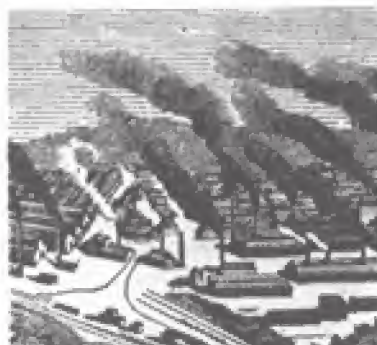
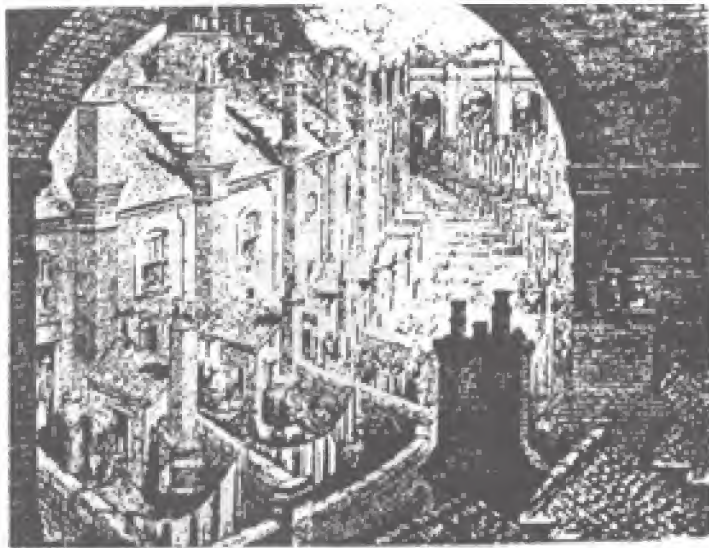
The dominant middle class was also concerned that the working masses, crowded into large industrial centres should acquire a minimum of instruction. These "ignorant people" had to be socialized, in other words, educated to become good citizens and disciplined workers.

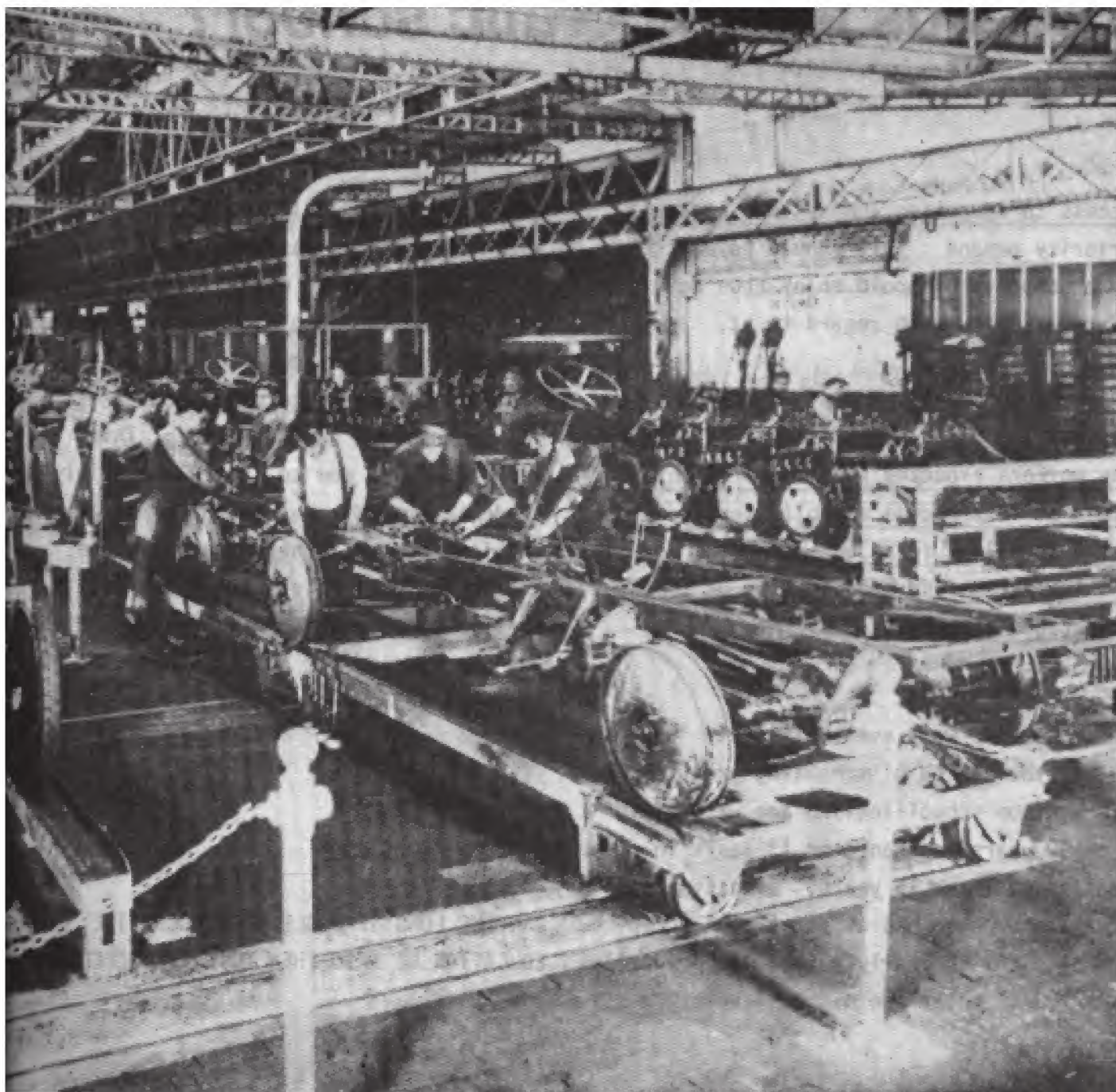
Little by little, there appeared alongside the SCHOOL OF THE RICH, another school, the SCHOOL OF THE POOR. Its function was to furnish future workers with the minimum of culture necessary for their integration into the lowest ranks of industrial society.

The coexistence of these two types of school gave rise to a situation of real SOCIAL SEGREGATION.

The children of working people went to "primary schools" which were not structured to give access to prolonged study.

The children of the elite followed a path separate from that of the nobility, and under the monopoly of the middle class.





PRISONERS OF MACHINES, SUBJECTED TO A SOUL-DESTROYING WORKING PACE AND SCHEDULE, AND OVER-EXPLOITED BY INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM, THE WORKERS GRADUALLY DEVELOPED THEIR CAPACITY TO STRUGGLE FOR THEIR RIGHTS.

Towards a democratic school?

Access to education and culture became a priority demand : all should have access to a school and should enjoy true equality of opportunity with regard to it.

Free and compulsory education was seen as the key to this democratization of studies. The workers expected the school -- which would at last become a public service available to all -- to be an instrument for the liberation and emancipation of the disadvantaged classes.

These demands were eventually met. Over the years, the period of schooling grew longer: the minimum school-leaving age was raised from 10 years in France or 13 years in England to 15 or 16 years. Education free of charge, which had at first been accepted only for the early years, was gradually extended to cover the higher levels.

In this way, it was possible gradually to abolish the dual system of one school for the rich and one for the poor. From this point, all the children started their

education in a single school, and only after this school was there any SELECTION, in other words, separation of pupils into two main avenues: a long one leading to higher education, and a shorter one leading to technical or vocational schools and apprenticeship. This separation was now to take place solely on academic grounds: successful pupils took the long avenue, others the short one. This meant that selection, which had earlier been based on birth or wealth, was now carried out by the school, an apparent guarantee of fairness.

CAN THE LONG STRUGGLE TO DEMOCRATIZE EDUCATION BE SAID THEN TO HAVE SUCCEEDED ?

It all depends.

If by "educational democratization" you mean the fact that each year more and more pupils are staying on at school, studying longer and obtaining diplomas

YES, democratization has unquestionably occurred

- in France, in 1958 45% of young people were at school at the age of 16 and 17% at the age of 18; in 1972, the figures had risen to 67% and 27% respectively;

- in Geneva, the ratio of high-school students to apprentices rose from 1 high-school student per 2 apprentices in 1960 to 2 high-school students per 3 apprentices in 1975.

On the other hand, if "educational democratization" means the provision

of equal opportunity for children from different social backgrounds, NO, the struggle has not succeeded.

And yet, it might have been expected to, for all the conditions for equality of opportunity appear to have been met:

WITH THE SAME STARTING-POINT FOR ALL (the single school) AND THE SAME AVENUE OPEN TO ALL (compulsory and free education), THE "BEST", THE MOST "GIFTED" AND THE MOST "WORTHY" OUGHT TO SUCCEED, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR SOCIAL ORIGIN.



What happens in reality?

TRUE, the children of industrial, agricultural and office workers now have greater access to education, but their chances of success remain much less than those of other social categories.

social inequality remains

- in achieving success during the early years
- in progressing along the various avenues
- in further studies.

1. failures, falling behind



Children of the working classes fail and fall behind at primary school much more frequently than other children.

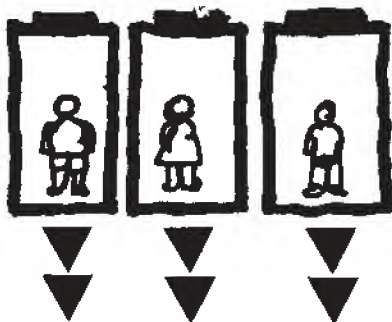
France :

According to figures issued by the Ministry of Labour (1974), 77% of children of manual and specialized workers had fallen behind at the end of primary school, against 16% of children of professional and managerial staff.

Belgium :

An earlier survey showed that there was an 80% failure rate for children from disadvantaged homes and 20% for children from moneyed families after 2 years of primary school.

2. selectivity



Similarly, the distribution of pupils in the various educational avenues varies greatly according to social levels (even where academic results are the same).

France :

At the end of primary school, in classes for 'weak' pupils (sixth transition class), of a total of 100 pupils, 61.5% of pupils were children of workers and 0.5% were children of professional and managerial staff.



3. abandonment

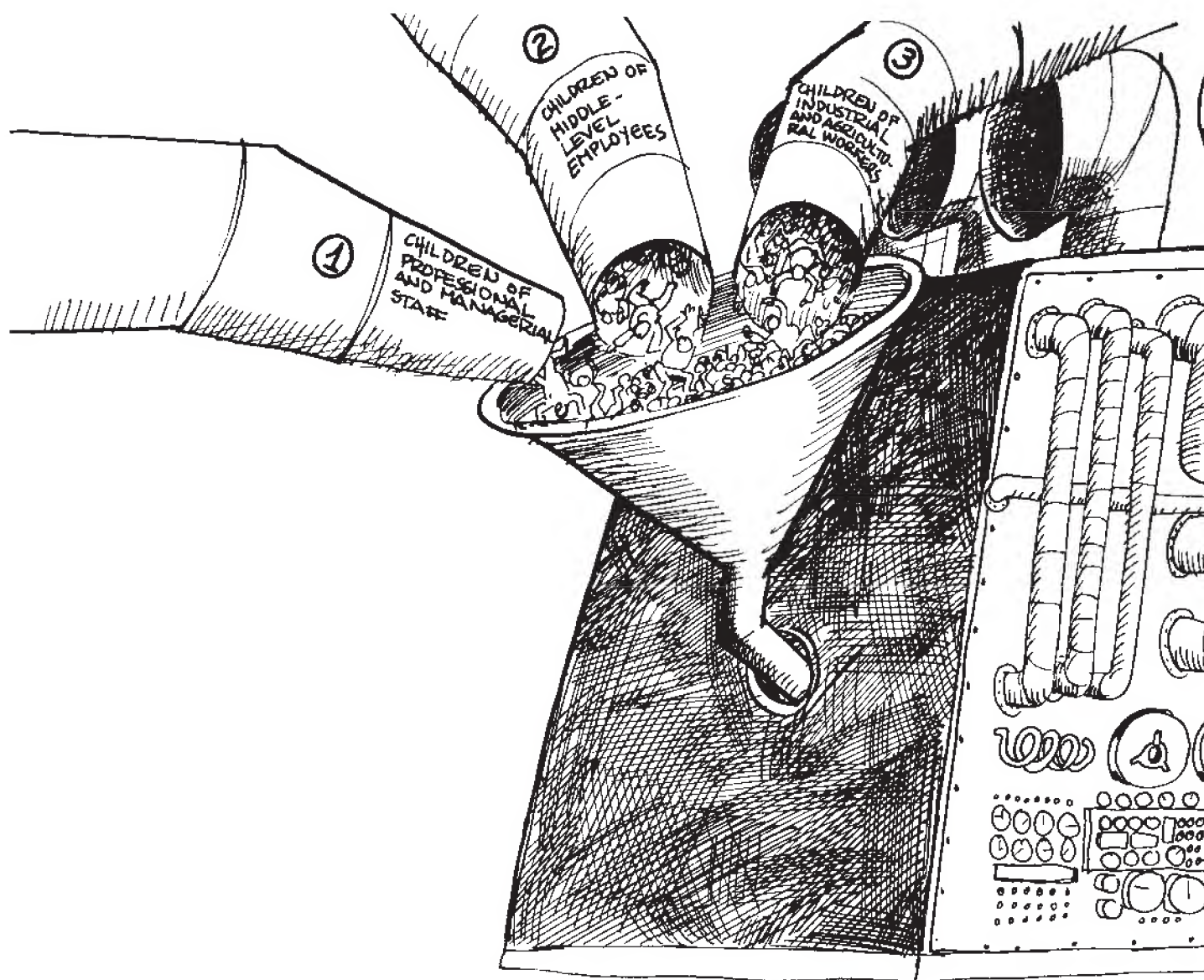
As for the abandonment of studies, which is known to be related to falling behind in school, mostly the underprivileged levels of the population are affected.



A study by UNESCO (1970) confirms that the rate of abandonment ("starting directly to work") decreases with each step up in the social hierarchy. In France, it goes from 54% among industrial workers to 13% at professional levels.

Switzerland (Geneva, 1976) :

- Of 3,200 adolescents from well-off families :
 - 2,400 were in high-school (including 900 in private schools)
 - 800 were at technical or commercial schools or training as apprentices
- Of 4,150 adolescents whose parents are workers or low-level wage earners, the proportions are reversed :
 - 650 were in high-school (including private high-schools)
 - 3,500 were at technical or commercial schools or training as apprentices.



like father, like son

All social classes recruit mainly from their own ranks. This is especially true in the extreme categories of the social ladder :

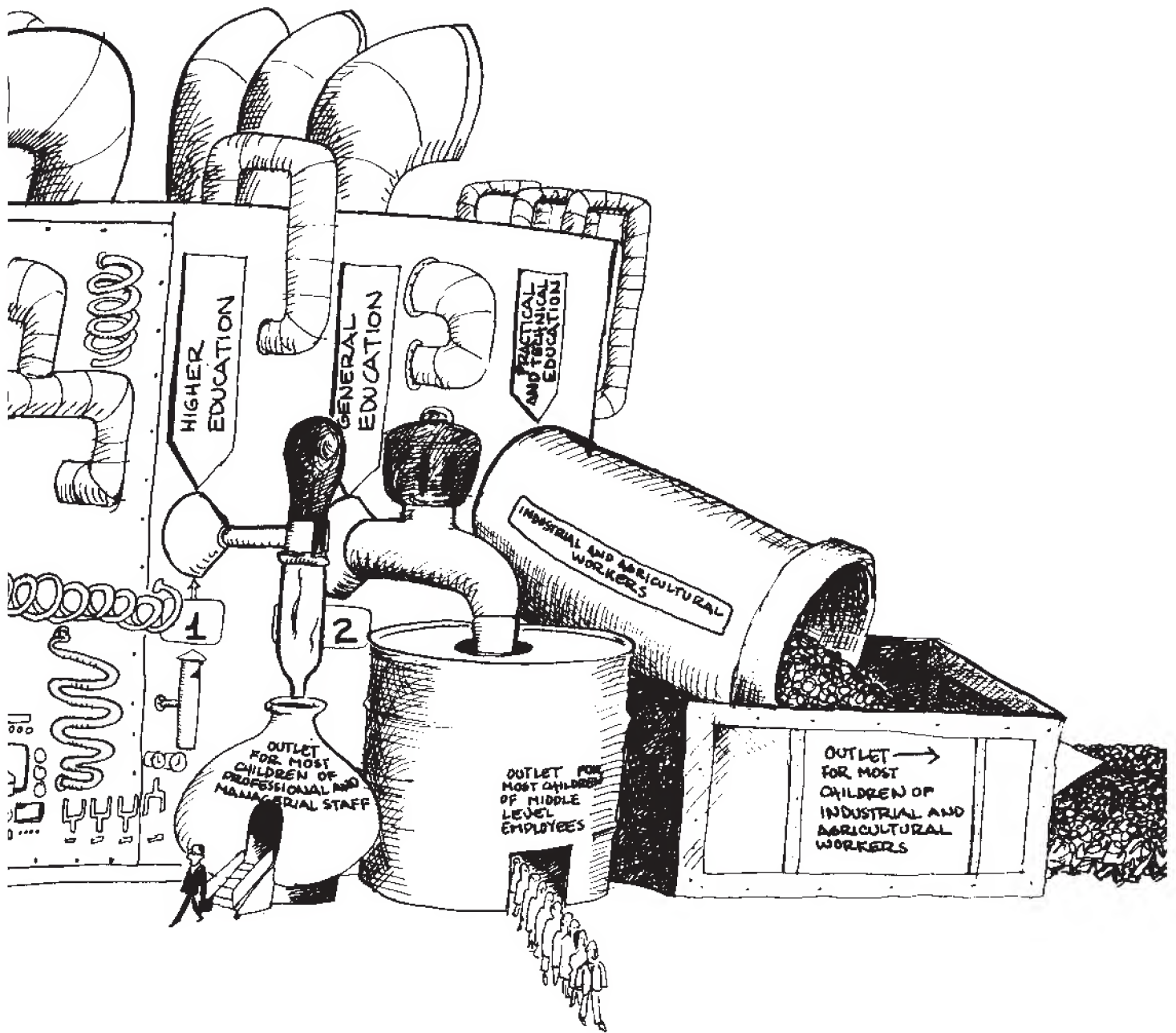
41.7% of the sons of professional and managerial staff go straight into jobs with the same status as their fathers.

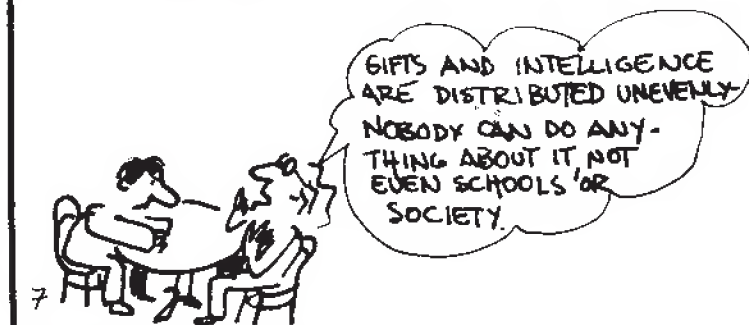
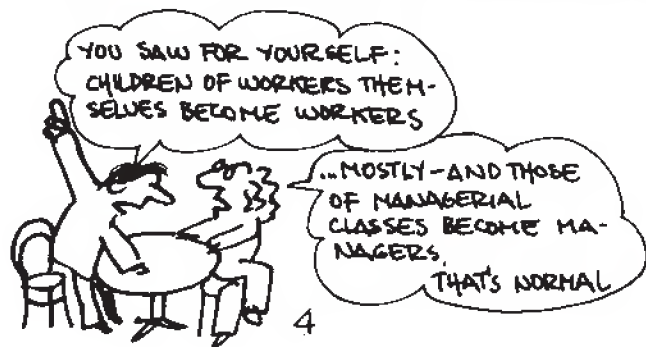
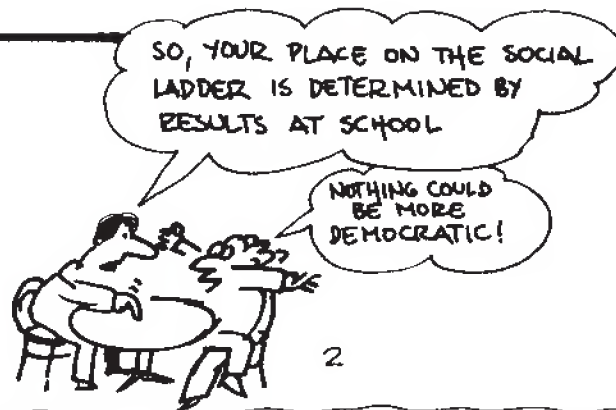
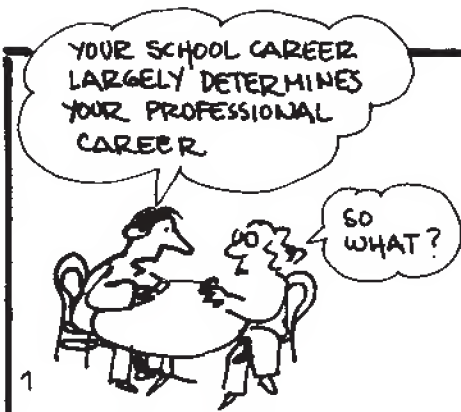
At the other end of the scale :

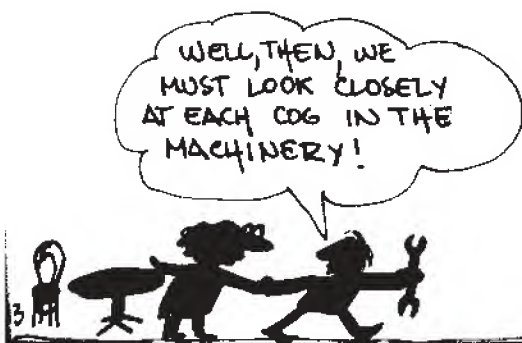
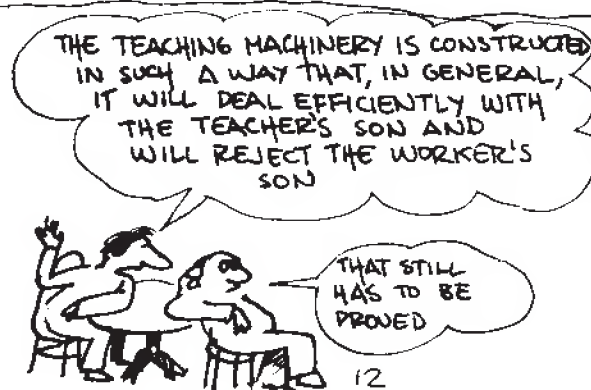
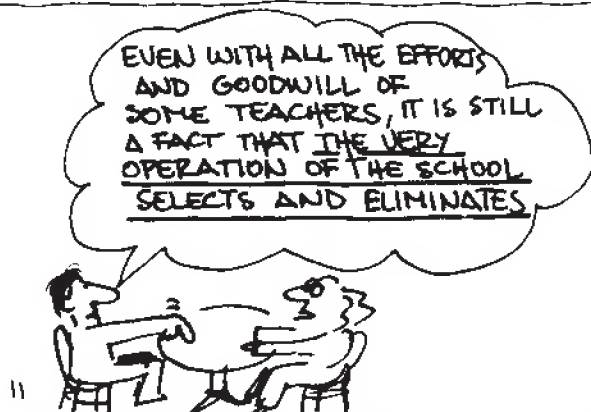
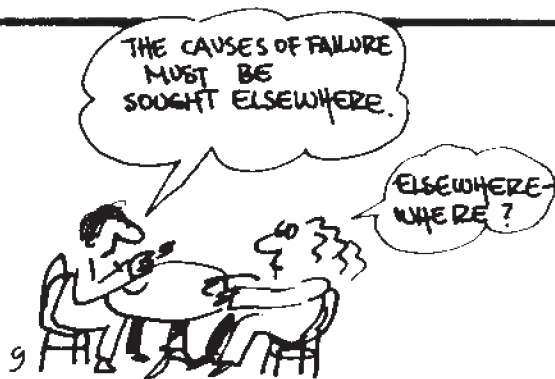
63.9% of sons of workers also become workers.

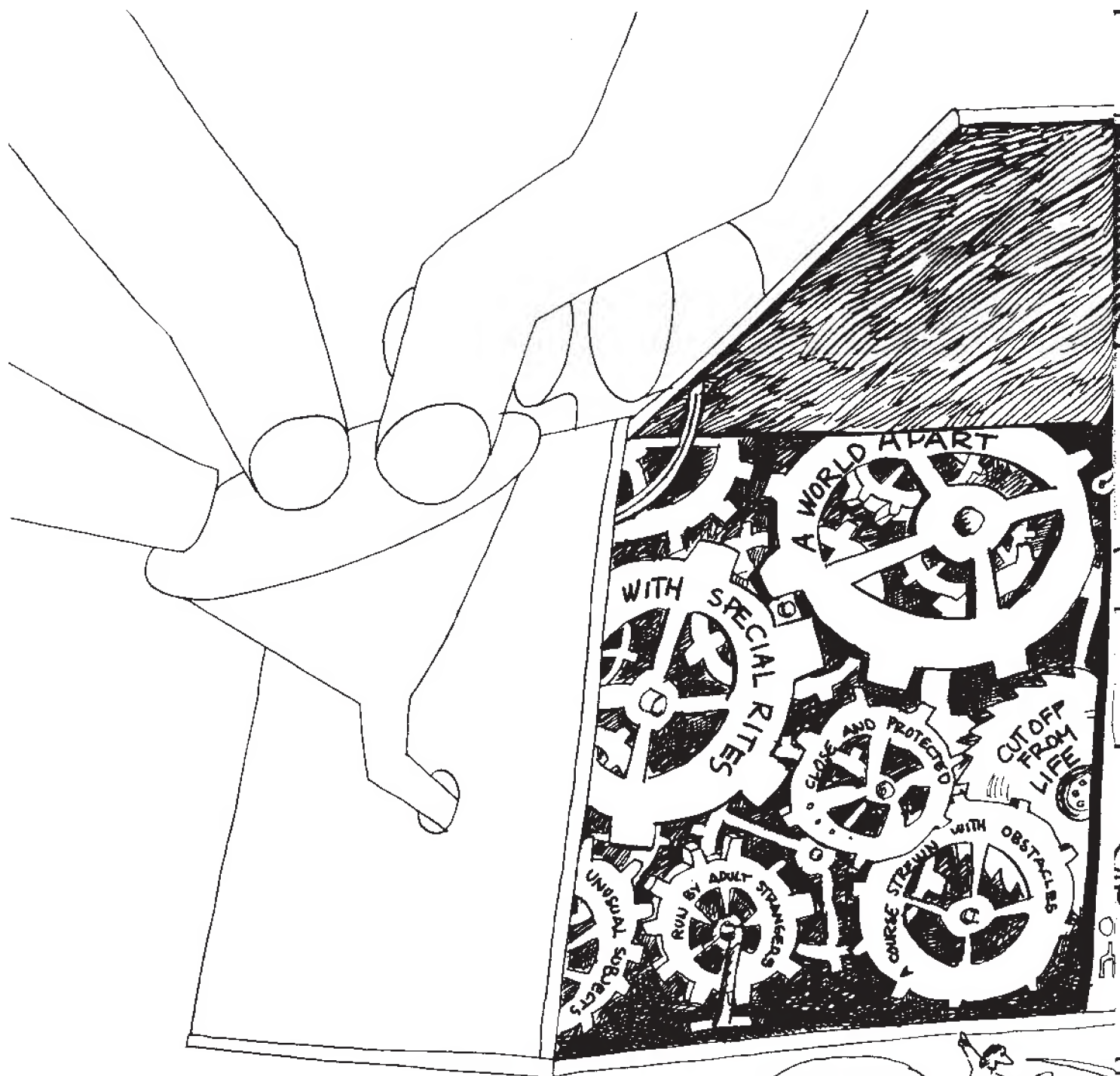
As for sons of agricultural workers :

38.8% work as their fathers did while 34.9% become industrial workers.

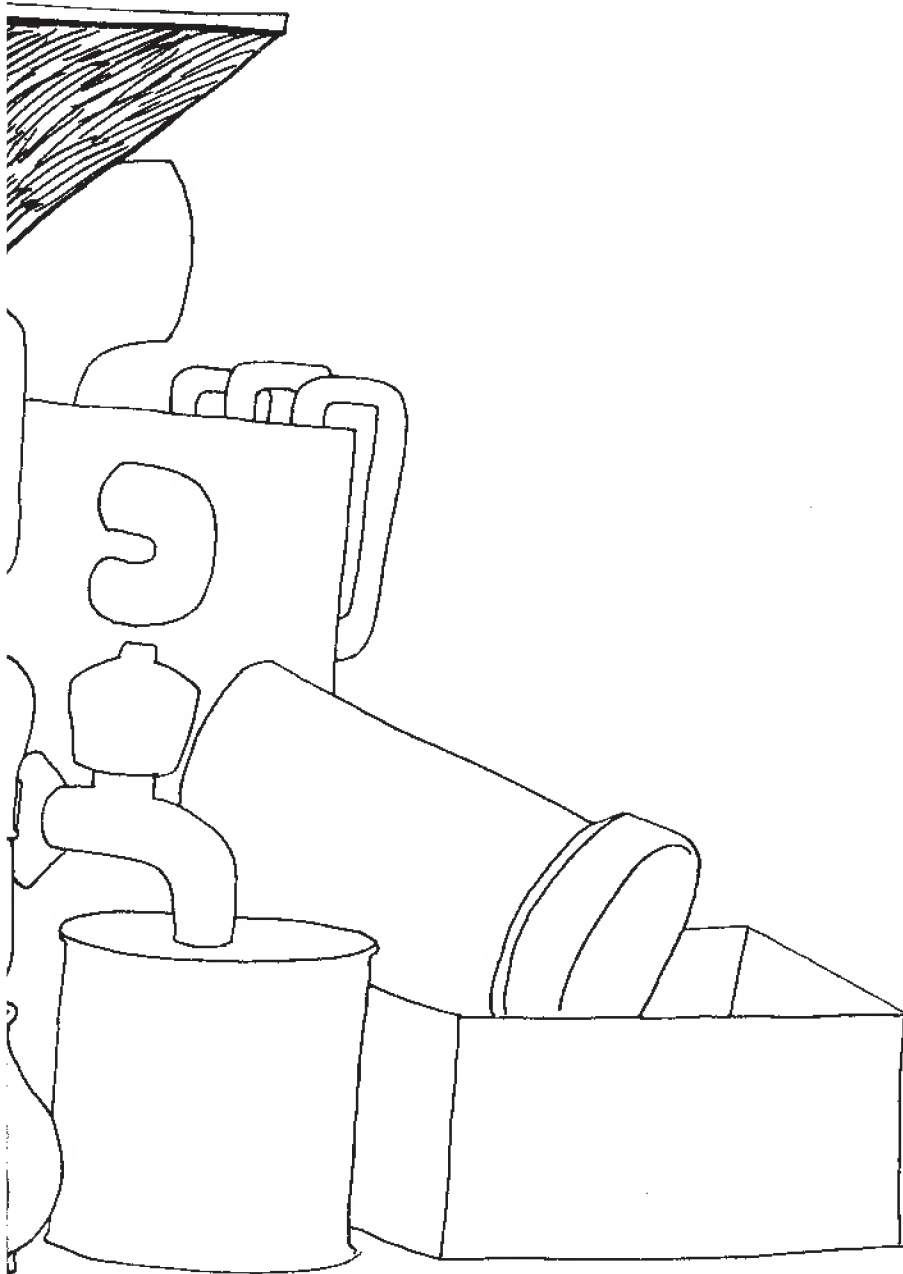








COME NOW!
THIS MACHINE
SEEMS TO BE RUNNING
PRETTY WELL! BETTER
NOT TO TOUCH IT! THAT
MIGHT PUT IT OUT OF
ORDER!

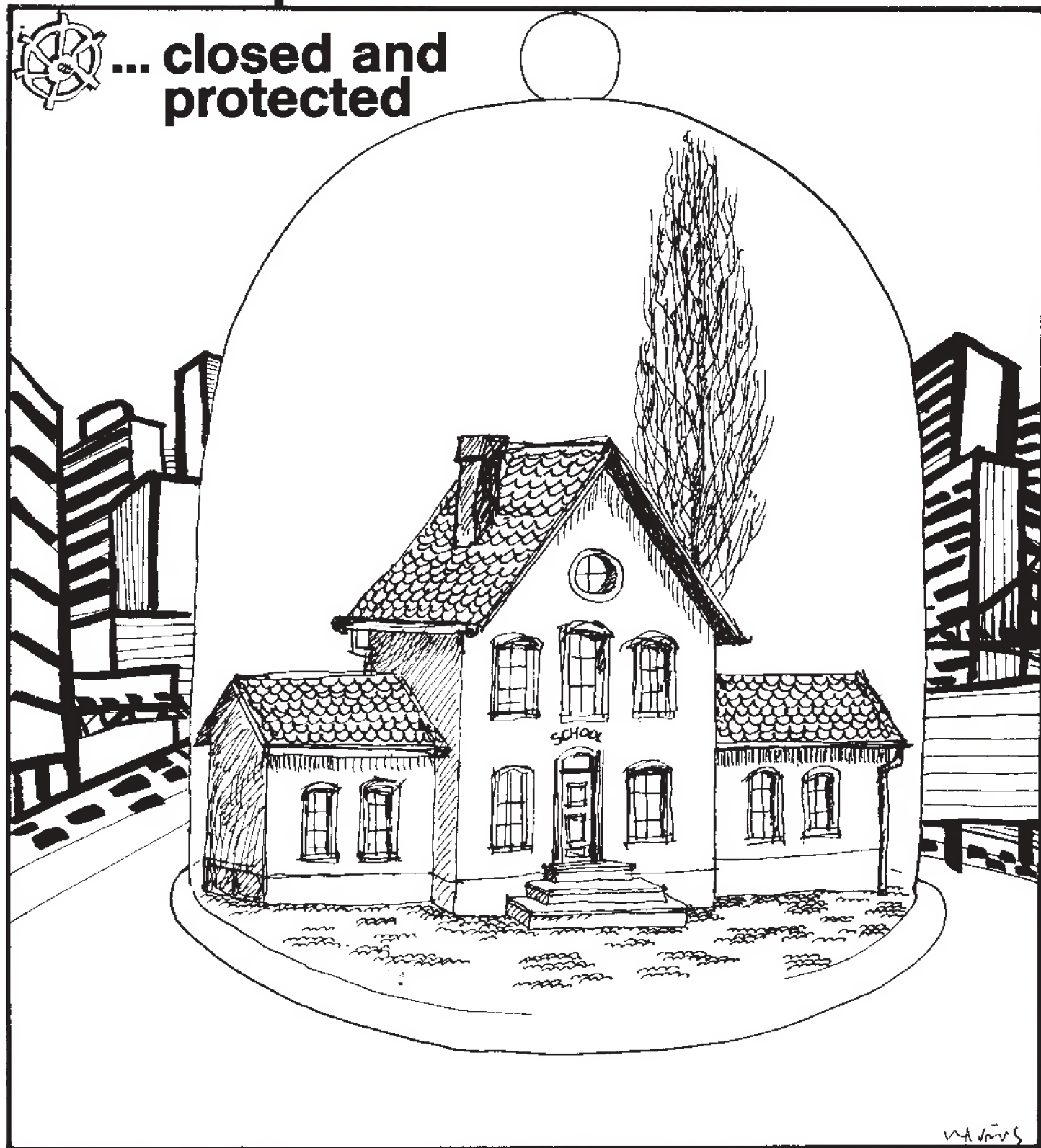


DON'T WORRY,
IT IS ALREADY OUT
OF ORDER! WE MUST
DISMANTLE THE WHOLE
THING TO SEE WHAT'S
GONE WRONG.

A world apart...

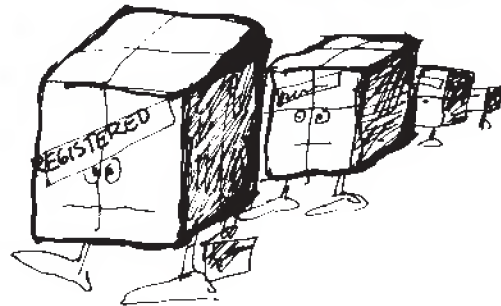
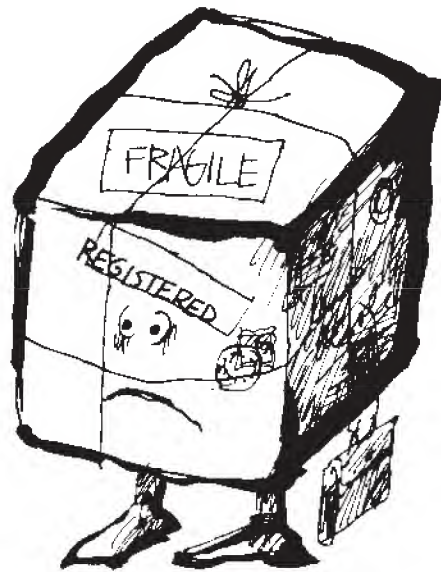


**... closed and
protected**





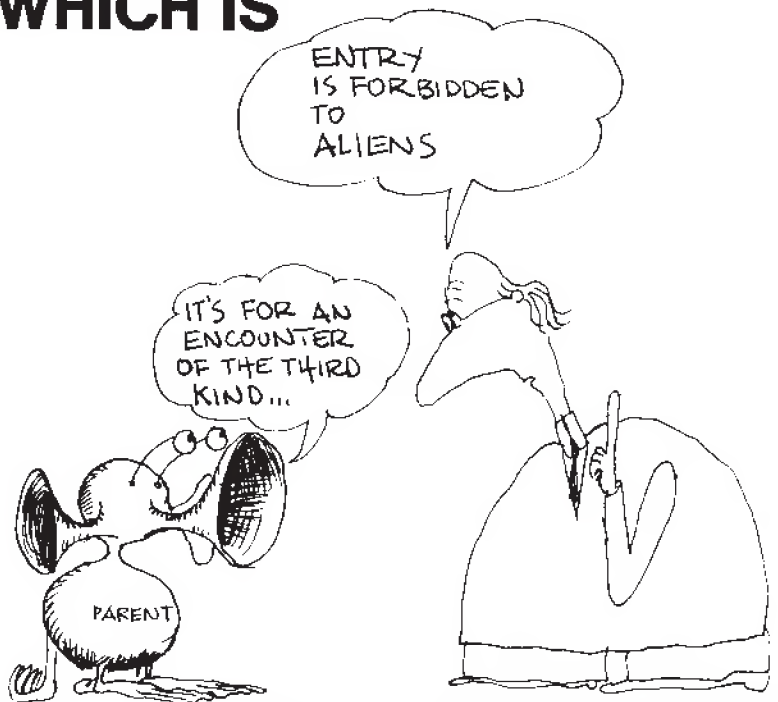
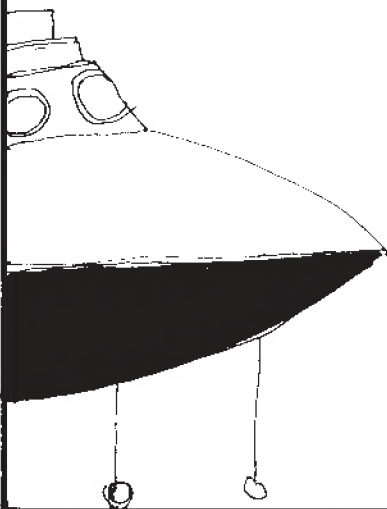
... TO WHICH THE CHILD IS ENTRUSTED
LIKE A
REGISTERED
PARCEL



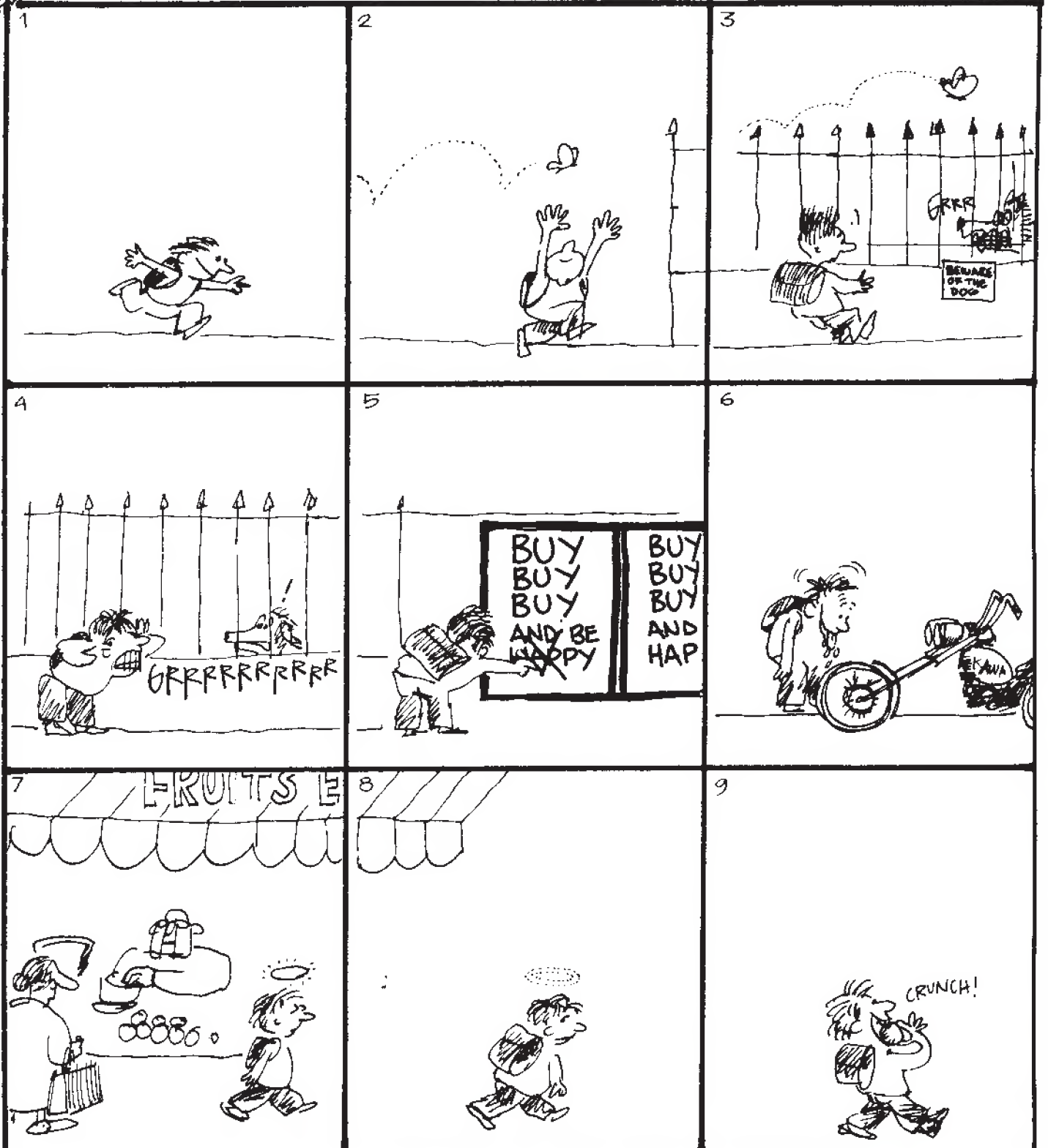
WARMY

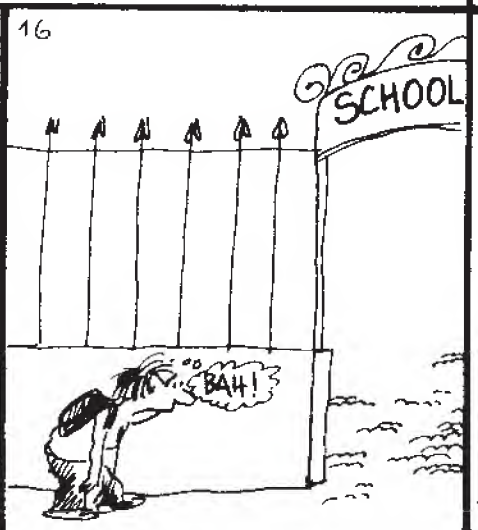
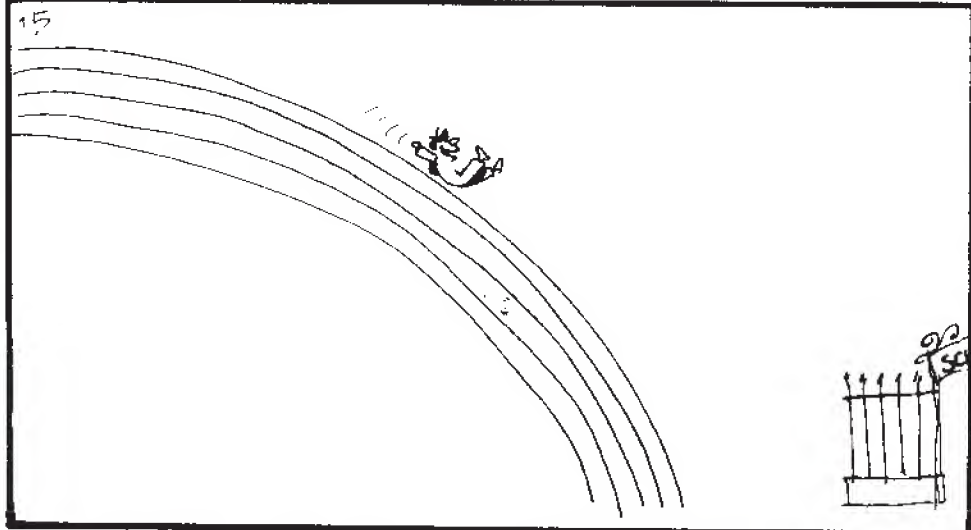
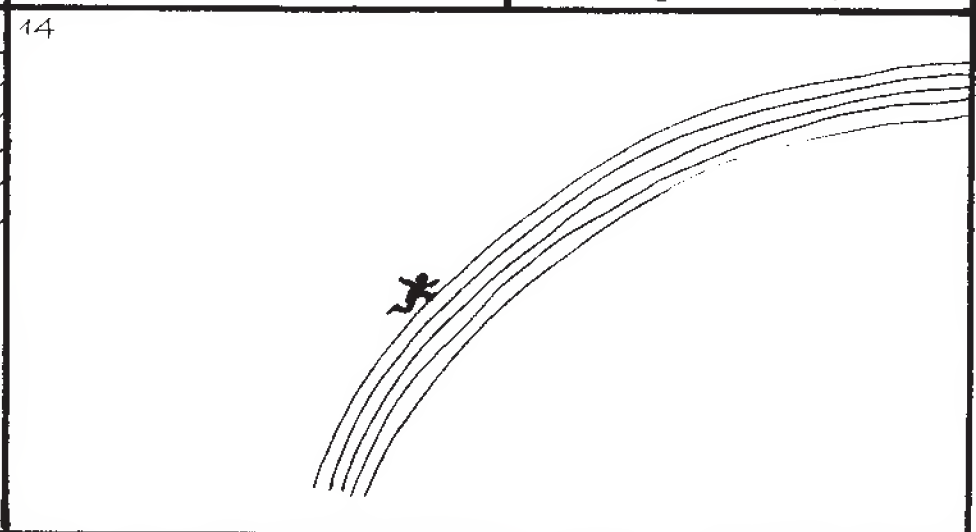
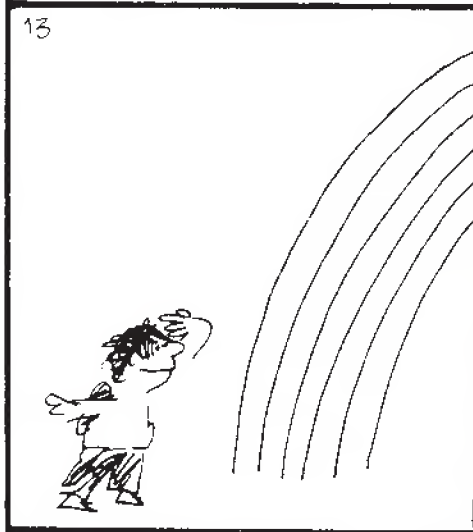
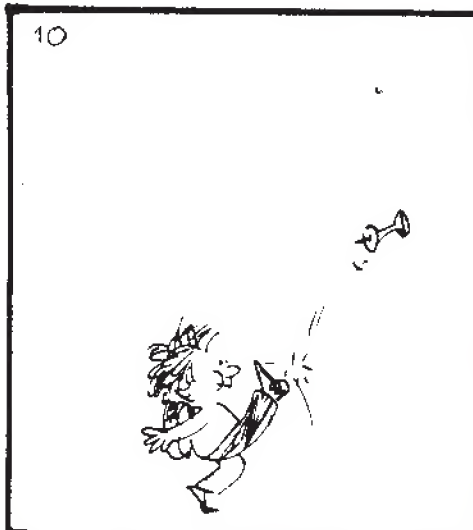


... ACCESS TO WHICH IS
CAREFULLY
GUARDED

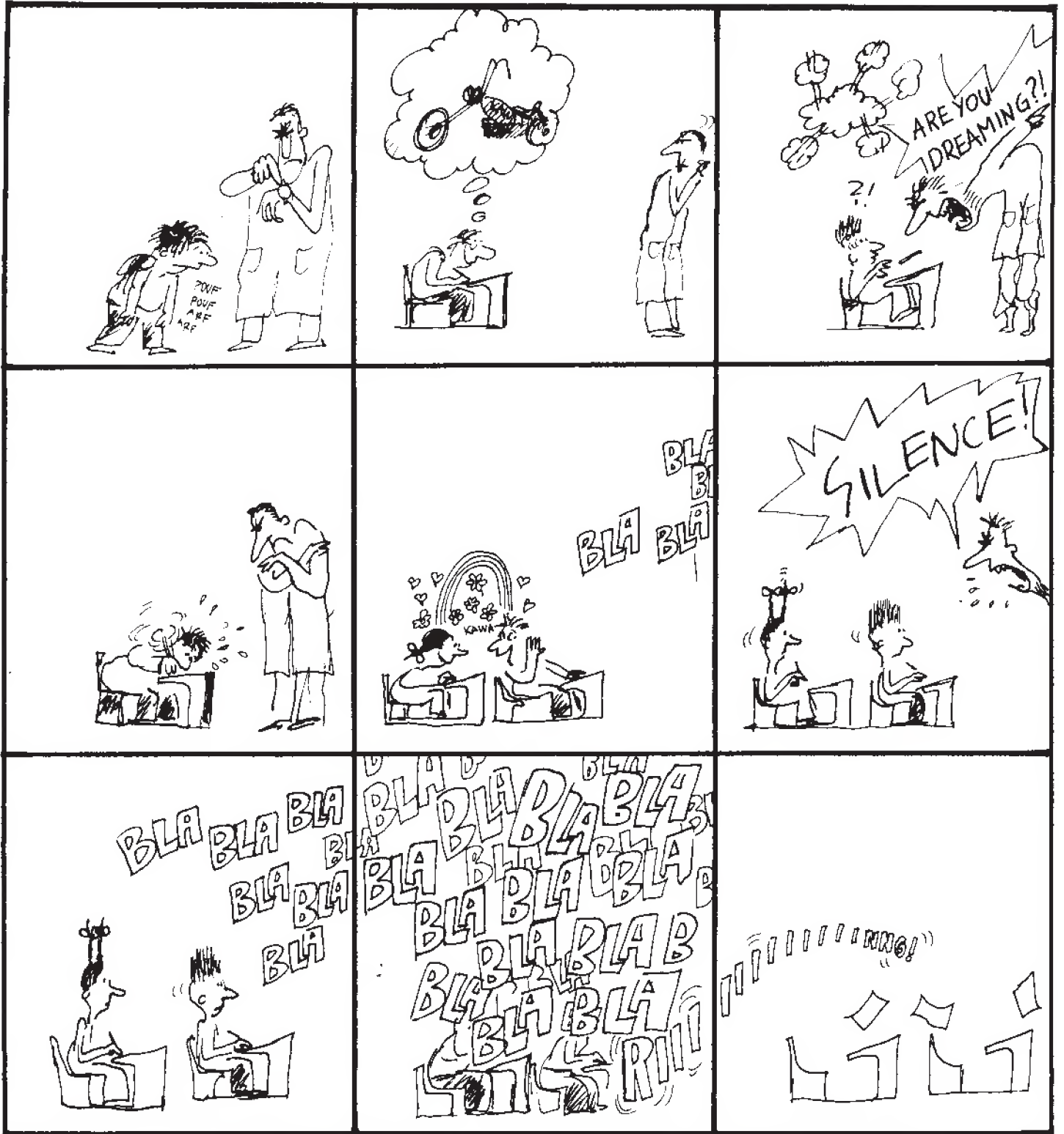


CUT OFF FROM LIFE





A WORLD OF UNCHANGEABLE RITES





A WORLD OF SILENCE, OF IMMOBILITY



Pinned down there at the age of six, after the preliminary exercise of kindergarten -- ambiguous, complex and important, a kindergarten to which children go earlier and earlier -- children find hard chairs and have to listen to words for hours on end. Is it by chance that this bundle of new energy, this adventurous explorer is kept immobile, petrified, confined, reduced to contemplating the walls while the sun shines and to the anguished suppression of any desire to empty his bladder or even his bowels, 6 hours a day, at fixed times, except for

a few fixed minutes of playtime and holidays on fixed dates, for 7 years or more?

How better could one learn to fall to pieces ? It exhausts your muscles, senses, internal organs, nerves and neurons. It is a totalitarian lesson, and the most pressing one is not the teacher's lesson. The sitting position is acknowledged to be harmful for the body, its vessels and ducts, and that is how your Occidental has a rigid spine, congested tubes, constricted lungs, haemorrhoids and a flat bottom. For a century now children have scraped their feet, writhed and jumped up as if spring-loaded when the BELL goes (not to mention the 20% with curvature of the spine). These things are put down to their being troublesome, not to the immobility which is forced upon them: the blame is laid on the victim. No, this doesn't happen by chance. It happens by design, however obscure to those who carry it out. We must smash it. Physically smash the fantastic desire and enjoyment machine.



In class, we list the actions implicit in writing and speaking a language.

For the spoken language, I asked my 14 year-olds what the school had done

so far to teach them to speak.

Alan's reply was spontaneous :

"We were told to keep quiet."

R.F.

The New School of Boulogne, an experimental school run by Centres d'Entrainement aux Methodes d'Education Active has been standardized. A boy of nine therefore went back to school to find himself in a "standard" class. He speedily came to a conclusion that is both naive and disillusioned : "Now we don't work any more, we listen." R.F.



WHERE RULES ARE PREDETERMINED...

THE PUPILS

KEEPS QUIET, LISTENS, OBEYS, IS JUDGED

He must conform to the model of a GOOD PUPIL.
For most schoolteachers, a good pupil is

"A docile, patient child who knows how to keep quiet and listen to what the teacher is saying. We give good marks to those who fold their arms!"

"A mind precociously turned towards words and ideas, and so capable of being interested in verbal and conceptual teaching and, hence, capable of making the effort required by such teaching (attention, perseverance, the will to memorize)."

"A child who attaches great importance to academic success, is hence filled with respect for everything that goes on in the school and is consequently willing to accept all school restraints with a good grace."

Future teachers were asked about the qualities they considered of prime importance in a pupil.

Being ATTENTIVE
DISCIPLINED
DOCILE.

took first place in 41% of cases.

A CRITICAL MIND
THOUGHTFULNESS
did so in only 2% of cases.



THE TEACHER TALKS, KNOWS, GIVES ORDERS, DECIDES, JUDGES, NOTES, PUNISHES

Note that in most cases this strict allocation of roles between teacher and child is seen as natural, NORMAL.

Normal, for example, that the pupil should have practically no say in deciding what happens each day in class (except to decide whether to work or not ...)

Normal that he should be totally dependent on the teacher's judgement to form a judgement of himself.

This is how 10 year-old children answered questions about their worth at school :

Antoine :

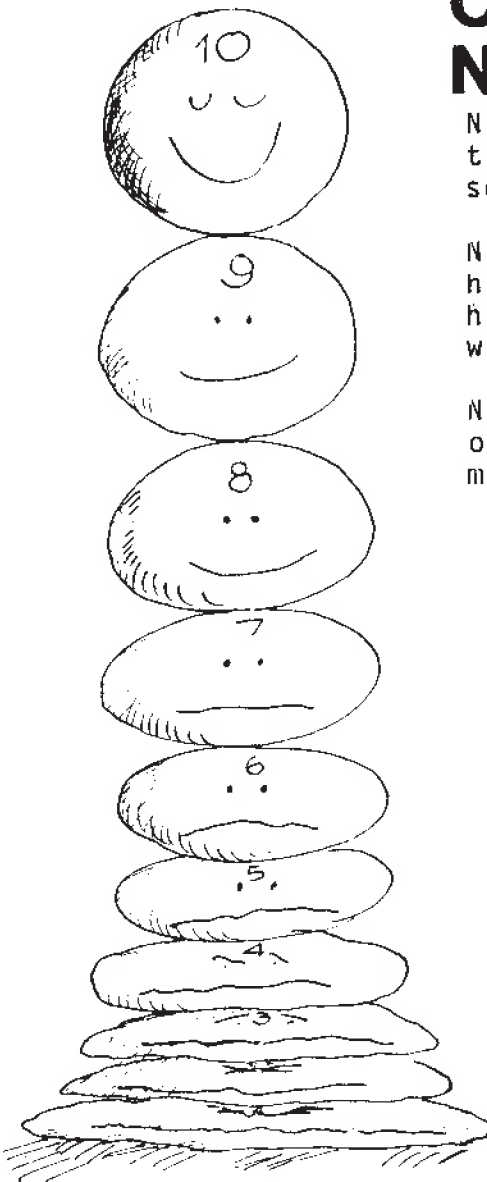
- Do you think you are a good pupil ?
- Not very.
- How do you know ?
- By my reports ... they say I am too noisy, not very good with other children ... they have said that several times ...

Luke

- Do you work well ?
- Quite well, yes.
- How do you know ?
- Because when my teacher corrects my work she writes 'good' or 'very good'.

Veronica

- Do you work well ?
- I don't know ... yes!
- How do you know ?
- I see if I get good marks.





A WORLD IN WHICH ONLY FINE LANGUAGE IS ALLOWED

During his early years, a child has to learn to speak and write a language which is often neither his own nor that of his parents, STANDARD SCHOOL LANGUAGE, the only one recognized as being correct.

Anything in his spontaneous speech which departs from the standards of this language (expressions, sentence structure, pronunciation etc.) is picked out, corrected and penalized by the teacher, whether it is oral or written. In the hope, of course, that as they are continually corrected all pupils will eventually speak and write the language required by the school.

But the result is that some children will prefer to remain silent, rather than risk the reproach that they speak "badly", and reduce their written output to the bare minimum rather than exposing themselves to the traditional strictures ("poor vocabulary", "clumsy style", "bad choice of words" ...).

Linguists and psychologists both condemn the possible adverse effects of a method of learning which the child sees as deprivation and expropriation.

E. Roulet :

"By trying in this way to eradicate from the child's language everything that does not conform to the standard norm, you discourage him forever from expressing himself (and are then surprised that the adolescent's capacity for expression is so poor and awkward!)

But the problem is even more serious and the damage caused still more insidious, since it does not affect only the child's ability to express himself: since the language spoken by an individual is an essential component of his personal and cultural identity and integrity, the strictures and sarcasms aimed at that language are bound to affect that identity and integrity."

R. Berger :

"The identity which the child feels between the language he speaks and his individuality means that any corrective action taken with regard to his language may be interpreted as a value judgement on his person."



" ... After all, I am used to not understanding! I don't understand three quarters of what is said and what I am made to write at high-school -- grammar, science, morals -- and a good third of the words which I read, which are dictated to me or which I use. I have even noticed that the less I have understood in writing my texts, the more chance they have of coming first."



Romain ROLLAND
("Le Voyage intérieur")

... WHERE ONLY WHAT IS AUTHORIZED IS ACCEPTED

1

EMPTY
YOUR
POCKETS!



2



3

MORE!
MORE!



4

WHAT?!!!

CIGARETTES?!!
AT YOUR AGE??!!!



5

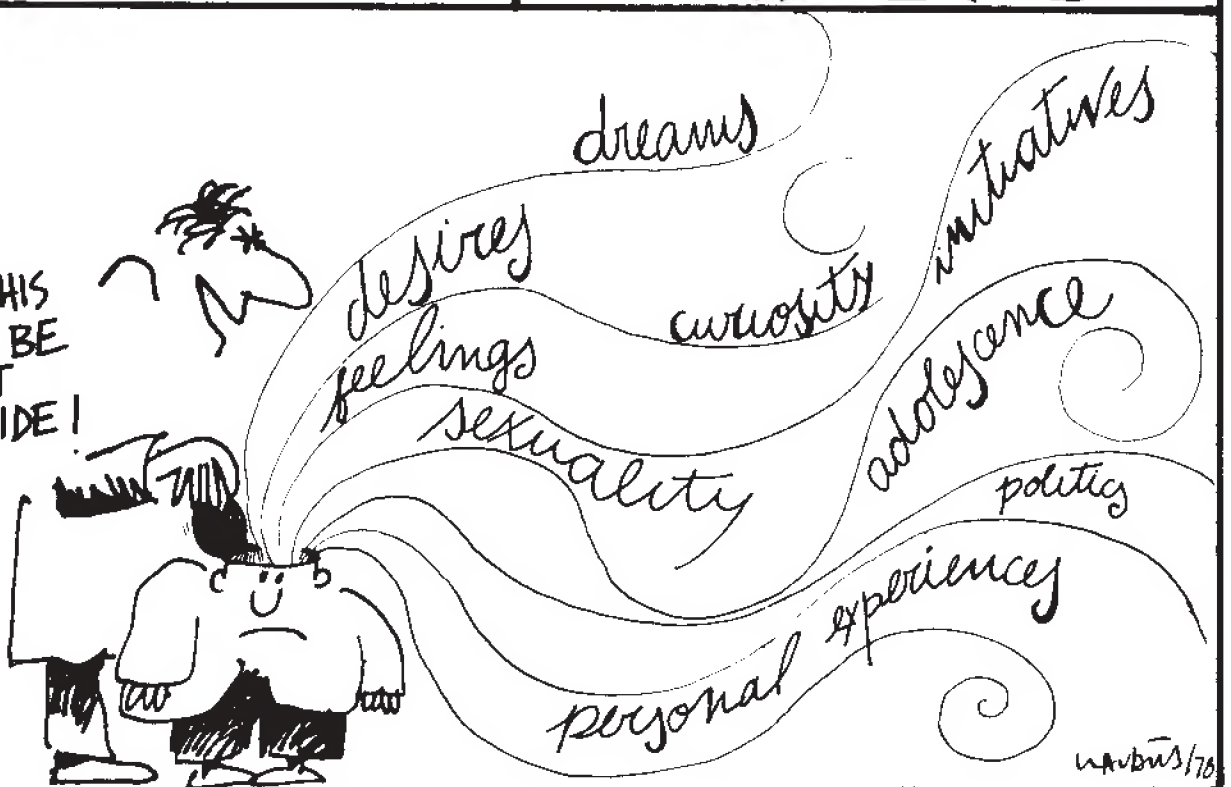


6



7

HA!
HA!
ALL THIS
MUST BE
LEFT
OUTSIDE!



WABUS/70



A WORLD OF UNIFORMITY

ABCDEFGH
abcdefghijk

ABCDEFGH
abcdefghijk

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
defhiklmnopqrs

The school treats all children in the same way,
they all have to work at the same pace,
with the same textbook and the same equipment,
they all have to learn the same phrases,
know the same words,
they all have to acquire the same knowledge,
they all have to pass the same exams at the same time.



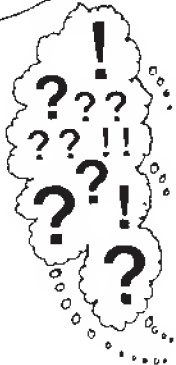
... OF ARTIFICIAL COMMUNICATION



Most of the questions put by the school teacher and most of the exercises in expression which he sets are part of a context of artificial communication :

- the questions are not real questions, because the person asking them has the answers;
- the exercises are not messages of real significance, because the recipients already know what they contain.

The child therefore has to accept this convention, has to play the game. And in this game, "giving the right answer" must often get confused in his mind with "giving the answer (whatever it may be) that the teacher wants to hear" ...





AND OF PUNISHMENTS

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will ~~not~~ not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

I will not misbehave in class.

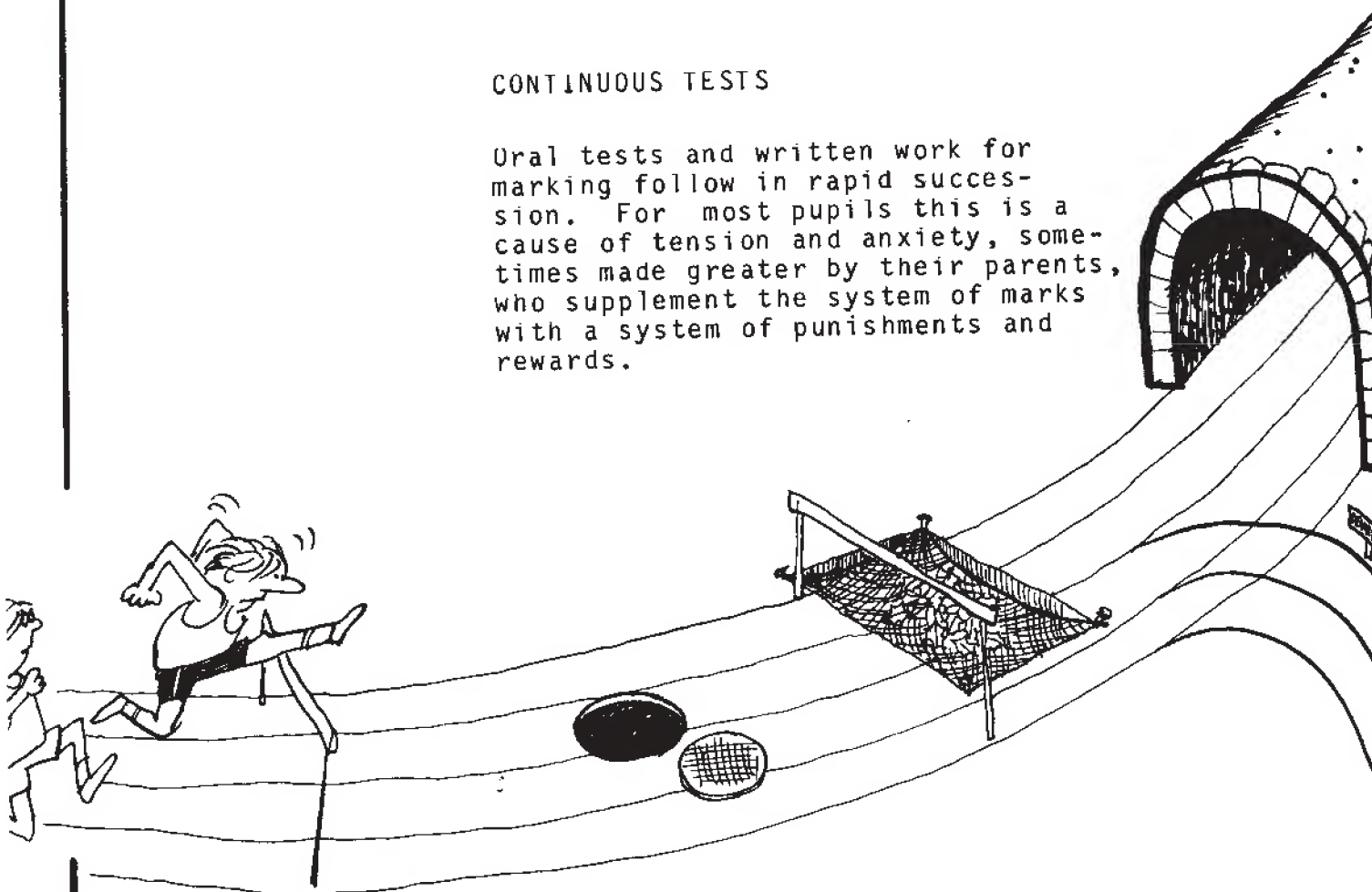
... WITH A COURSE STREWN WITH OBSTACLES

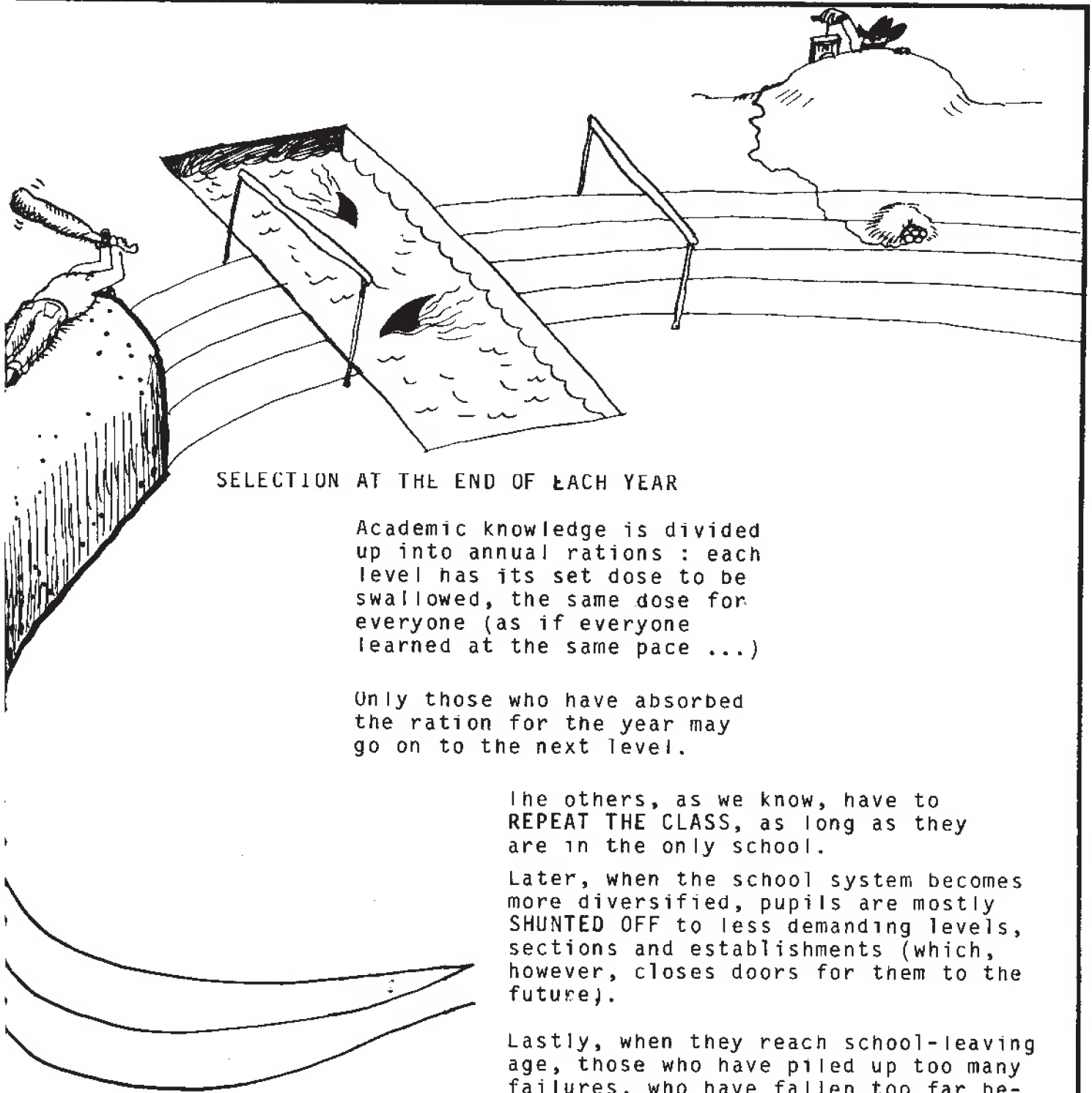
"Exams should be abolished. But so long as they exist, at least make them fair. The difficulties should be made commensurate with those which may arise in life. If you make the exam more difficult, then you have a mania for setting TRAPS. As if you were making war on the kids."

BARBANA (7)

CONTINUOUS TESTS

Oral tests and written work for marking follow in rapid succession. For most pupils this is a cause of tension and anxiety, sometimes made greater by their parents, who supplement the system of marks with a system of punishments and rewards.





SELECTION AT THE END OF EACH YEAR

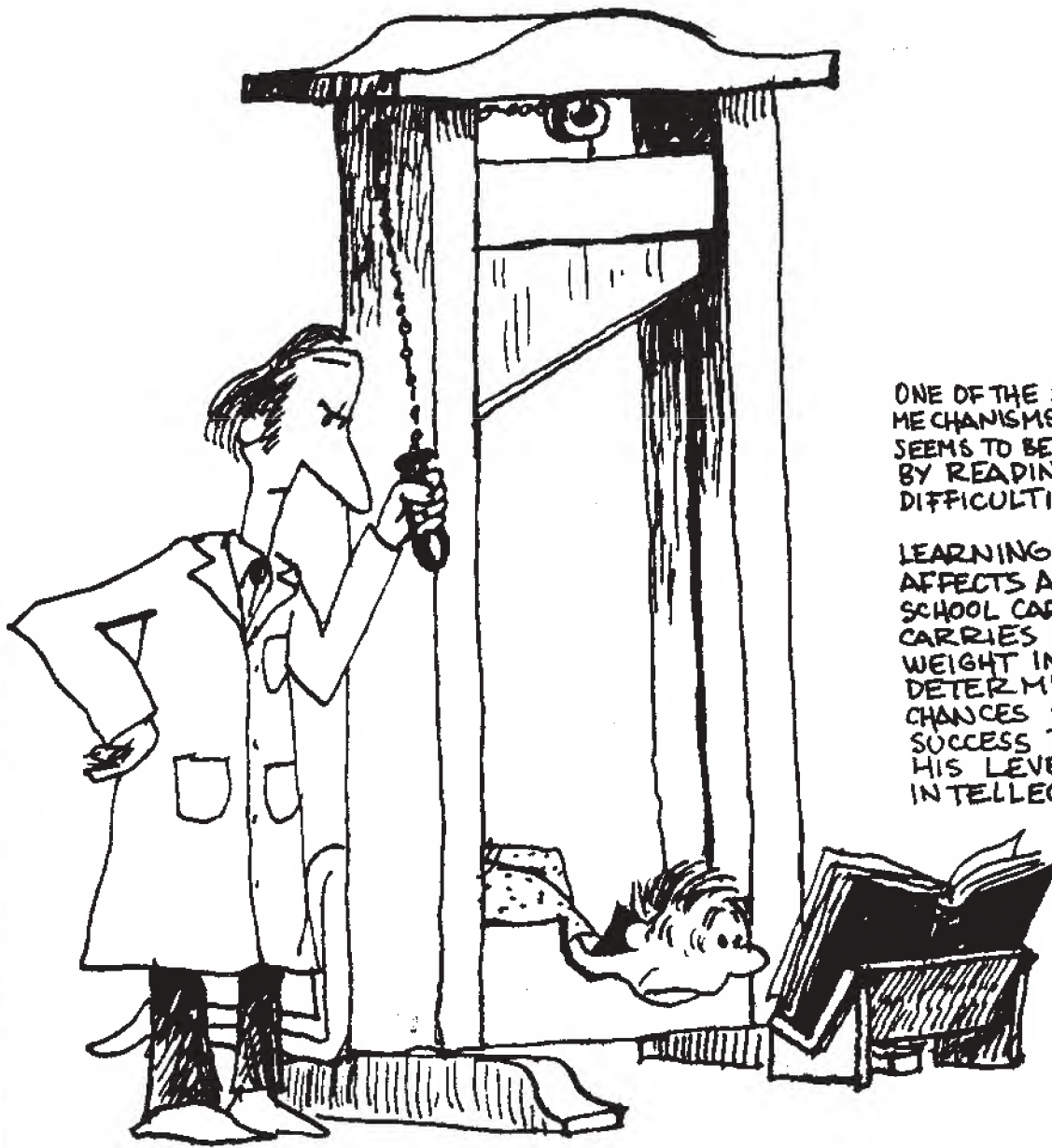
Academic knowledge is divided up into annual rations : each level has its set dose to be swallowed, the same dose for everyone (as if everyone learned at the same pace ...)

Only those who have absorbed the ration for the year may go on to the next level.

The others, as we know, have to **REPEAT THE CLASS**, as long as they are in the only school.

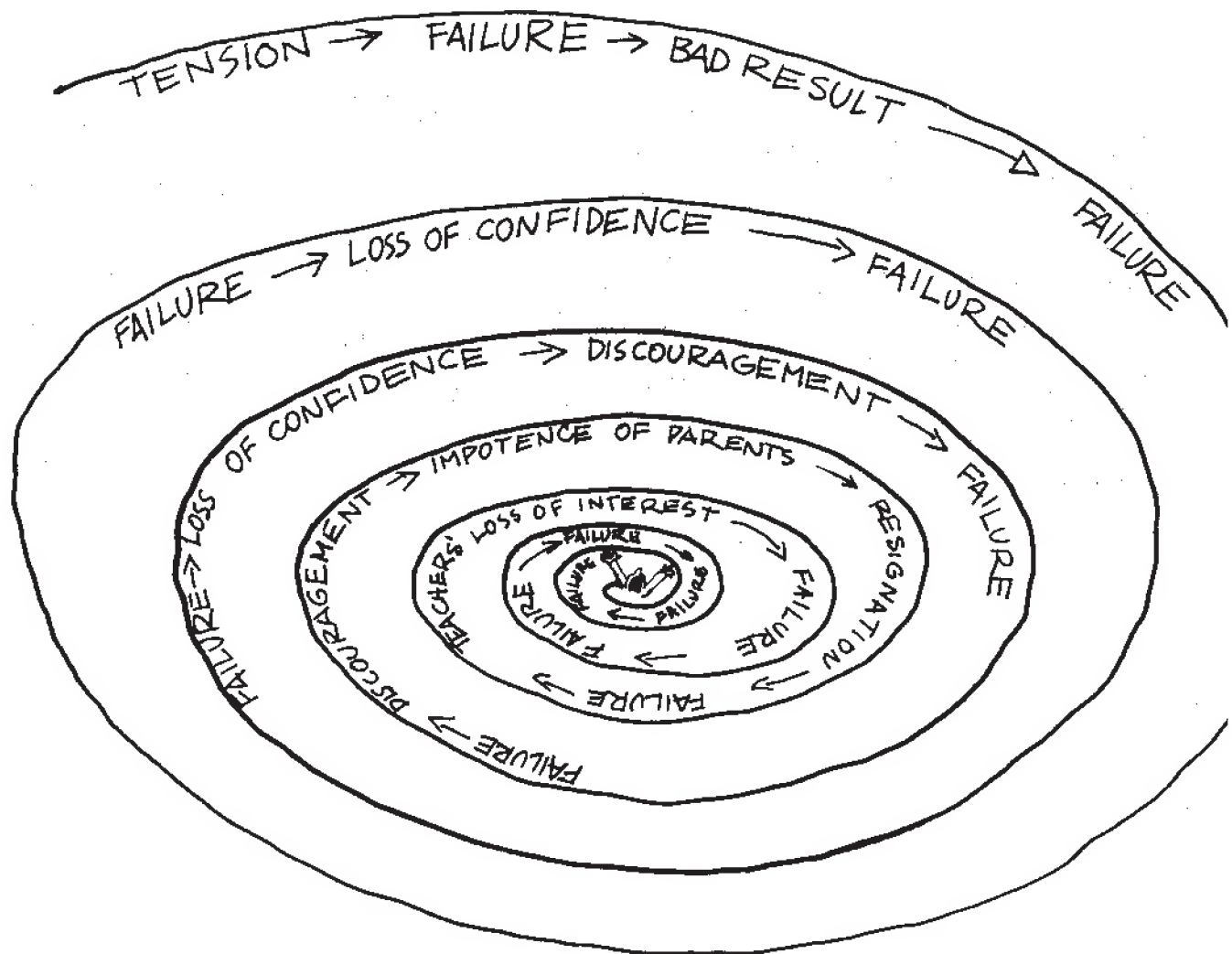
Later, when the school system becomes more diversified, pupils are mostly **SHUNTED OFF** to less demanding levels, sections and establishments (which, however, closes doors for them to the future).

Lastly, when they reach school-leaving age, those who have piled up too many failures, who have fallen too far behind, are **REJECTED**.

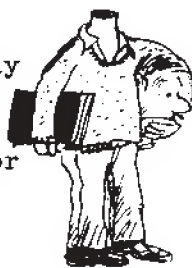


ONE OF THE STRONGEST
MECHANISMS CAUSING FAILURE
SEEMS TO BE THAT TRIGGERED
BY READING
DIFFICULTIES.

LEARNING TO READ
AFFECTS A CHILD'S ENTIRE
SCHOOL CAREER AND
CARRIES GREATER
WEIGHT IN
DETERMINING HIS
CHANCES OF
SUCCESS THAN
HIS LEVEL OF
INTELLECT.



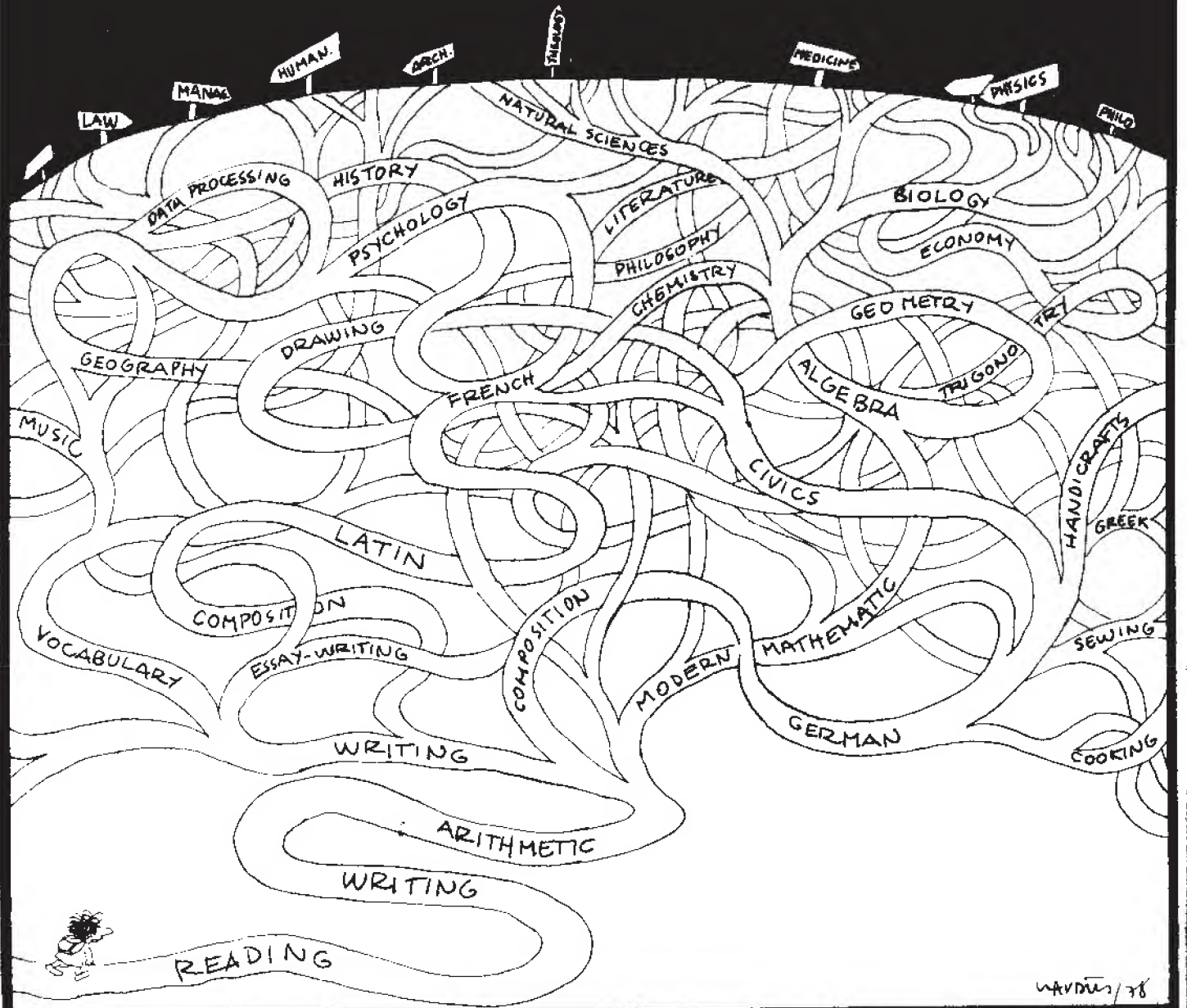
Jean Hébrard carried out a survey among teachers : "On entering the sixth class, pupils are speedily sorted out and those are picked out who can read well enough to work at home and prepare projects, those for whom reading can bring other knowledge -- which goes a bit further than the ability to read a novel. These will be the good pupils, those who will pass their school-



leaving exams. By definition, a good pupil is an independent pupil, capable of working alone at home. This group represents twenty-five per cent of the school population. The others have to struggle because of their inability to read usefully. And most of the time the sixth class teachers do not realize this fact. They merely say 'This child doesn't work' ... "



A WORLD OF UNUSUAL SUBJECTS





**... WHICH HAVE
NEITHER
MEANING
NOR
IMMEDIATE
USEFULNESS
FOR THE
PUPILS**



Children cannot by themselves feel the usefulness of the work imposed on them. The various school exercises, which are often repetitive and demanding, only rarely bear their own justification; they therefore evoke either tacit acceptance of the 'school convention' or sufficient fear of punishment to silence protest.

When protests such as ...

.. "grammar is stupid"....

.. "what's the use of maths ?"...

are made all the same, adults, whether they are parents or teachers, often have no other reply to give but

.. "You will find it useful later!"

.. "You will understand when you are grown up!"



... CUT OFF FROM REALITY

CUT OFF FROM EXTERNAL EVENTS

which are impossible to 'programme' because of their richness, their variety and the fact that they cannot be foreseen.

CUT OFF FROM EVERYDAY REALITY

of children, the kind of real experiences with which they would feel at ease.

CUT OFF FROM PRACTICAL REALITY

which would make learning meaningful. (Rarely does one find a class in which writing serves as a medium of external communication or mathematics become necessary to find a solution to real problems).

THE ECLIPSE

I had prepared a glass; I had smoked it with a candle so that we could watch this rare phenomenon safely in the classroom.

Some colleagues had come into the playground before the children returned; one of them asked ironically who had smoked the glass. There was a diffident discussion of the dangers of watching with the naked eye.

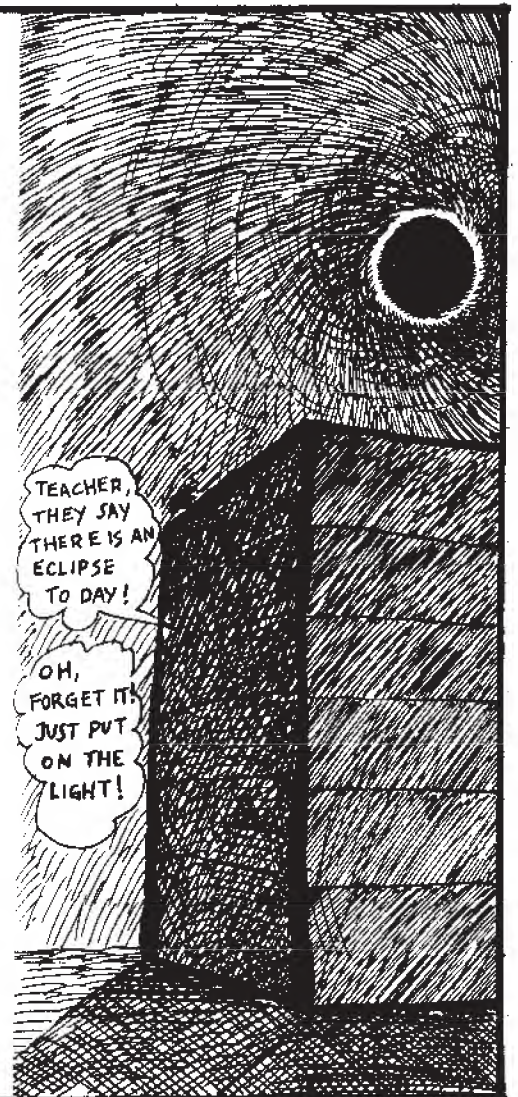
A colleague said :

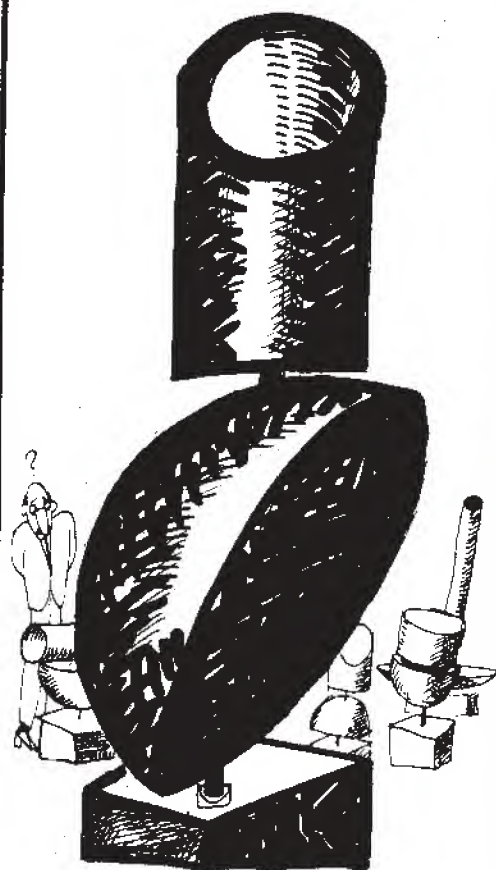
"I'm not afraid, because my classroom is here and the sun is on the other side."

He simply could not imagine that a teacher could be anywhere else but in his classroom at 8:39, even when there is an eclipse.

The bell (which doesn't read the newspapers) rang at 8:39 and the flock of docile sheep filed in as the moon started to move across the orange and sombre disc that was the sun.

R.F.





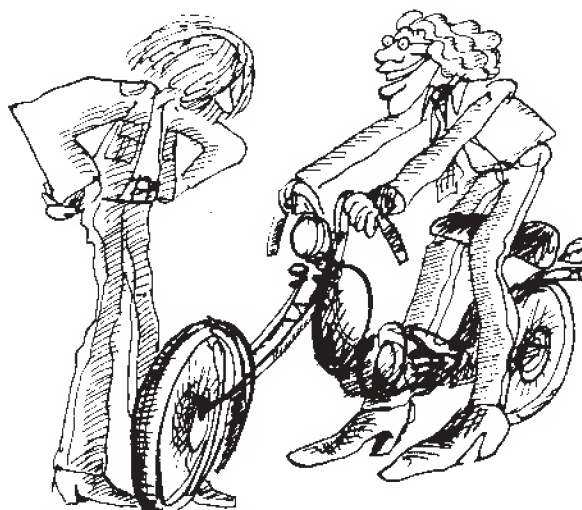
The geometry problem reminded one of a sculpture at the Biennale : "A solid is formed of a hemisphere surmounted by a cylinder whose surface is equal to three-sevenths of its own".

There is no instrument for measuring surfaces. In real life, therefore, it can never happen that the size of a surface is known before its dimensions. A problem like this can only be the product of a sick mind.

BARBIANA (7)

HISTORY LESSON

The hour has struck and the teacher has entered, but the heated discussion among the pupils continues unabated ... Two pupils in this class at the Geneva High School are Spanish. The previous night, General Franco had ordered the execution of three Basque opponents, causing reactions throughout the world. The pupils turn to the teacher, ask his opinion, his help in understanding the situation better ... "Stop talking now and let's start the history lesson..." was his reply.



It must be realized that this baselessness and artificial nature of most of what is learned at school is one of the reasons why an entire sector of the school population loses interest and becomes bored.

Moreover, this state of being cut off from reality becomes so much a part of the pupils that they themselves gradually give up building the few bridges still possible between school and life.

Adolescents who, once they pass through the doors of the high school, think only of their mopeds and talk only of races, records and masking the engine, are often silent and disinterested at physics lessons concerned with speed.



... PARTITIONED OFF, SPLIT UP

Because of the form learning takes, each piece of knowledge learned at school is carefully put in its own drawer, one for grammar, one for geography, one for history, one for spelling etc., none linked with any other. As long as you remain at school you will take them out when needed; but the pupil who has a well-stocked spelling drawer uses it only for dictations, filling his other written work with the most glaring errors.

And of course the contents of these drawers are strictly ranked in order of importance. Some drawers hold things of great value. In the primary school, for example, one of the greatest riches which can be put in a drawer is spelling. Depending on whether a pupil has it or not, he may be allowed to continue his privileged studies.

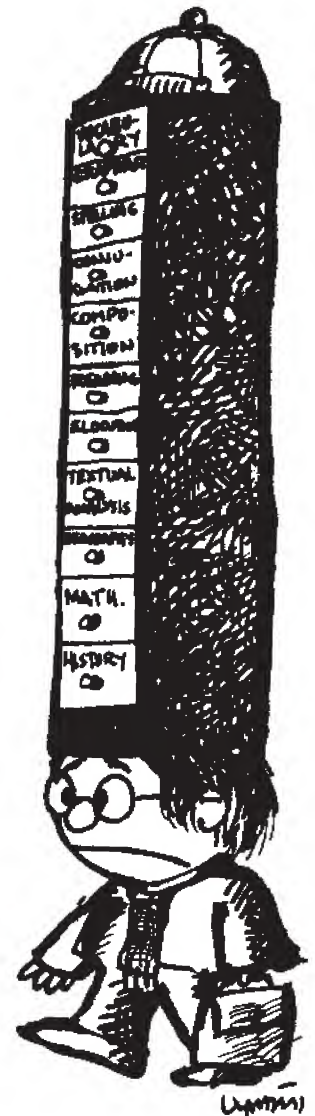
Others are much less highly regarded. Usually, it doesn't matter much at school if you have a drawer filled with music or beautiful drawings.

(...)

Teaching of the mother-tongue as still practised in most classrooms is a typical example of arbitrary compartmentalization. It is cut into slices : vocabulary, conjugation, grammar, elocution, spelling, composition, reading, textual analysis. And yet when an adult speaks, reads and writes, it would never occur to him to say he is exercising his English, still less vocabulary or elocution. He will say :

- I have had a discussion with friends;
- I have glanced at the newspaper;
- I have consulted a journal;
- I have written a letter;
- I have made a fair copy of the report of the meeting, etc.

R.F.





... STRICTLY GRADED IN IMPORTANCE

THE HIERARCHY OF THE VARIOUS SCHOOL SUBJECTS IS EVIDENT BOTH IN THE DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF TIME DEVOTED TO THEM AND THEIR RESPECTIVE IMPORTANCE IN THE EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PUPILS.

IN THE EARLY YEARS, A PRIVILEGED POSITION IS GIVEN TO

VERBAL SKILLS - written and oral -

to the detriment of other forms
of expression: gestures, pictures, music

INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

to the detriment of manual activities;

AN ABSTRACT APPROACH

to the detriment of concrete approaches
and experimentation





A WORLD RULED BY STRANGE ADULTS

What are teachers ?

All powerful in their classrooms, masters of the destiny of the children entrusted to them, as some parents believe ?

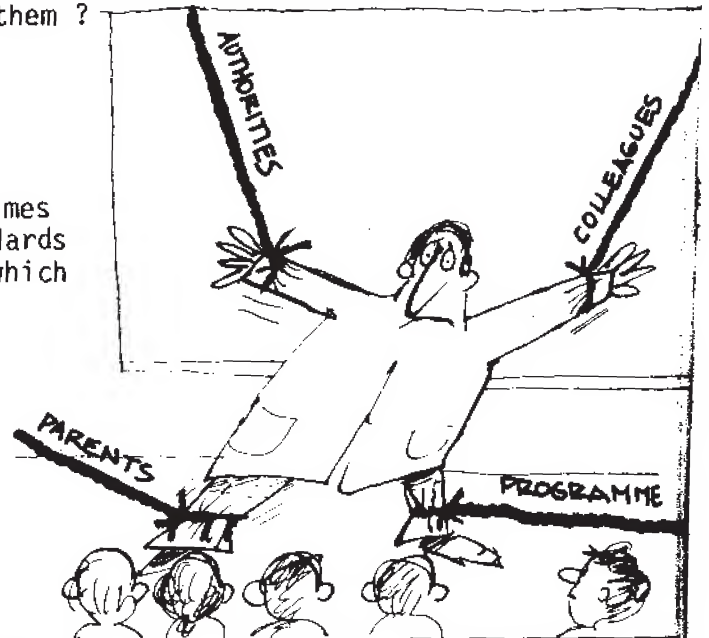
Or, on the contrary, are they simply performing at the service of an institution which could not run without them ?

They are caught in a system of constraints and checks similar to those which they impose on their pupils.

Some of them accept this system and even sometimes uphold it to the extent that they may set standards in their classes even more onerous than those which the institution wishes to set.

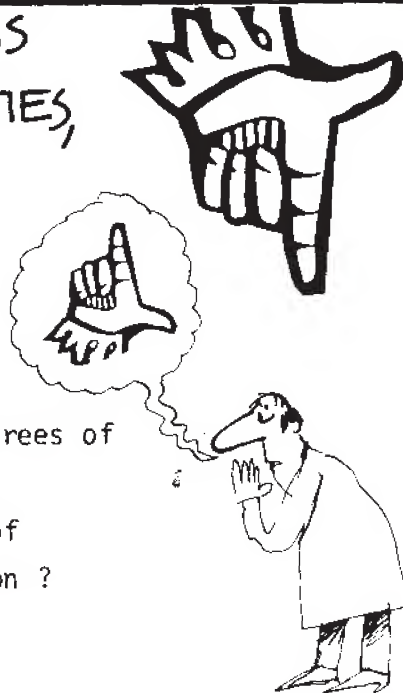
Others, on the other hand, want to find new horizons, opportunities for change.

WHAT MARGIN OF FREEDOM
IS THERE FOR
THESE TEACHERS ?



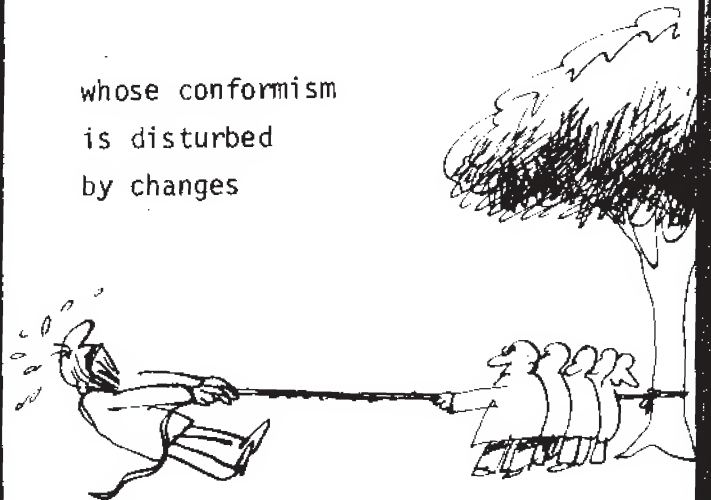
1 ... VIS A VIS
THE
AUTHORITIES,

guarantors,
in varying degrees of
intransigency,
of the norms of
the institution ?



2 ... VIS A VIS
THEIR
COLLEAGUES,

whose conformism
is disturbed
by changes



In any event, acceptance by teachers of the educational system, its practices and justifications, is fairly widespread and clearly represents an efficient cog in the machine.

Never having left the educational world (going straight from school to college or university and then back to school as teachers), many of them have absorbed the school's customs and values: the importance of individual performance, for example, the overdevelopment of the intellect, being cut off from external reality.



3 ... VIS A VIS PARENTS

the links of society and sometimes even more effective guarantors of academic and social norms ?

It is not, of course, all parents whose supervision is to be feared: it is the ones who speak up or write to the newspapers, who have the power.



4 ... VIS A VIS CURRICULA

Tyrannical curricula to which a teacher has to adapt his approach at all costs because of the exams, because of next year -- because of the teachers for next year whose judgement he fears -- curricula which are accused of all evils.



Teachers undeniably influence children directly by their personality, their attitudes, their relationship with the pupils and the way in which they interpret the institution's instructions. This influence may be exerted without their knowledge.

On mice and children

** A stupefying experience shows that there are rarely any dunces in class*

An American professor of psychology, Robert Rosenthal, once had the apparently preposterous idea of calling together twelve of his students, giving each of them five grey mice and giving them a few weeks to teach the mice to find their way through a maze. There was, however, one important detail: he whispered to six of the students that their mice had been especially picked for their particularly well-developed sense of orientation, and told the other six that, for genetic reasons, no great success could be expected from their mice.

In reality, these differences existed only in the minds of the students, since the sixty mice were identical in every respect. When the training period was over, Robert Rosenthal found that the 'overrated' mice had performed surprisingly well, while the 'underestimated' ones had hardly moved from the starting-point.

Buoyed by this result, Rosenthal wanted to try the

same experiment in a training area of a different kind -- a school. This was a strange adventure, the results of which have just been published in the United States (1), causing great embarrassment to teachers...

Drawing of lots

In May of 1964, Robert Rosenthal and his team arrived at an elementary school in South San Francisco, a poor area offering low wages, the home of many Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and families on welfare. In short, an area in which it is generally recognized that the performance of children at school suffers as a consequence of the fact that they are 'disadvantaged' by the milieu.

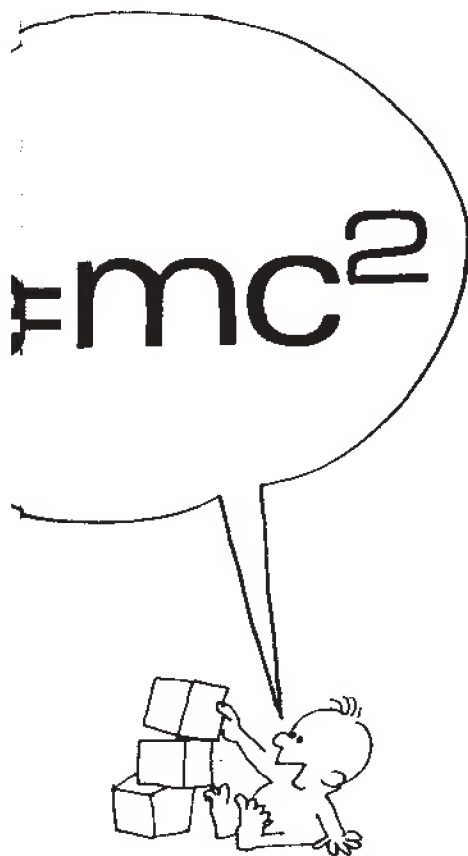
The intruders said that they were taking part in a 'vast study' undertaken by Harvard, financed by the National Science Foundation, on 'late developers'. Impressed by such grand-sounding credentials, the teachers opened wide the doors of their classrooms. The poor unfortunates were certain that they themselves, and not their pupils, were the subject of the investigation.

The contribution required of them nevertheless appeared to be eminently 'neutral'. They were merely asked to set, at the end of the school year, a 'new kind'



of test for the pupils in order to detect those who were capable of a spectacular spurt during the subsequent school year.

In reality, this was all faked. The test -- a standard IQ test -- was mere a pretext; the 'interesting' cases were chosen at random, twenty per cent per class, and their names were given in a deliberately offhand manner to the teachers: "Anyway, in case you are interested in the results of the tests we carried out for Harvard"... Having thus conditioned the



teachers without their realizing it, the research team merely had to wait and see what transpired. A further test was given four months after the beginning of the new school year, another at the end of the year and the last one a year later.

The results exceeded all expectations, leaving Robert Rosenthal and his 'accomplices' gaping. The pupils who had been artificially selected as promising better results had progressed much more rapidly than the others! To quote two examples from dozens: José,

a Mexican child, had an IQ of 61 before he became a 'star' in the eyes of his teachers. One year later, his IQ was 106. A 'backward pupil' the year before, he had become, merely by a drawing of lots, a 'gifted' pupil. The same amazing change occurred in the case of Maria, another Mexican, whose IQ rose from 88 to 128. Asked to describe the behavior of these 'interesting cases', the teachers emphasized their 'gaiety', 'curiosity', 'originality' and 'adaptability'.

The also-rans

One point, however, should be noted: the progress of these pupils who had turned into 'stars' was not uniform throughout the investigation. The most appreciable gains in the first year were made by the youngest children and those in the second year by the older ones. Why this difference? The young ones, strongly influenced by the teacher witnessing their 'spurt', progressed more slowly when they changed teachers; the older children, on the other hand, were less easily influenced at the beginning but more likely to sustain their performance by themselves without the support of a teacher.

Another revealing feature of the survey was the fate of the 'also-rans' whose names were not 'whispered' to the teachers. As we have seen, their results were far less brilliant than those of their classmates. But more serious still is the fact that if one

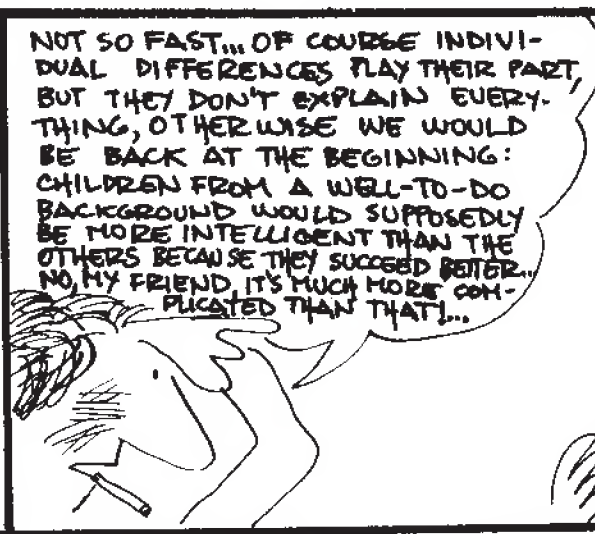
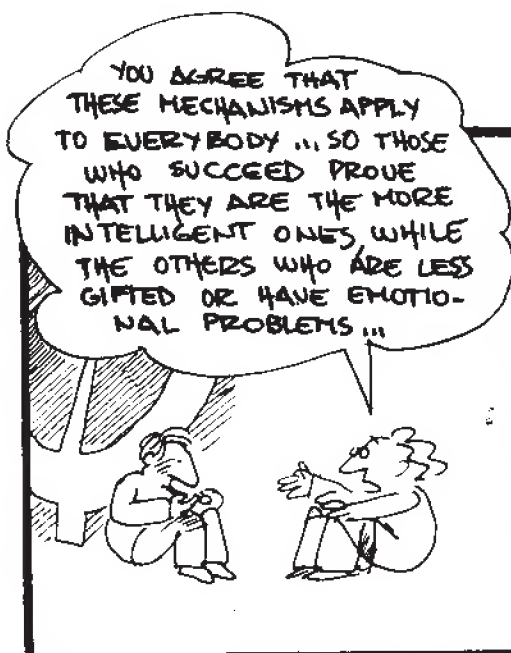
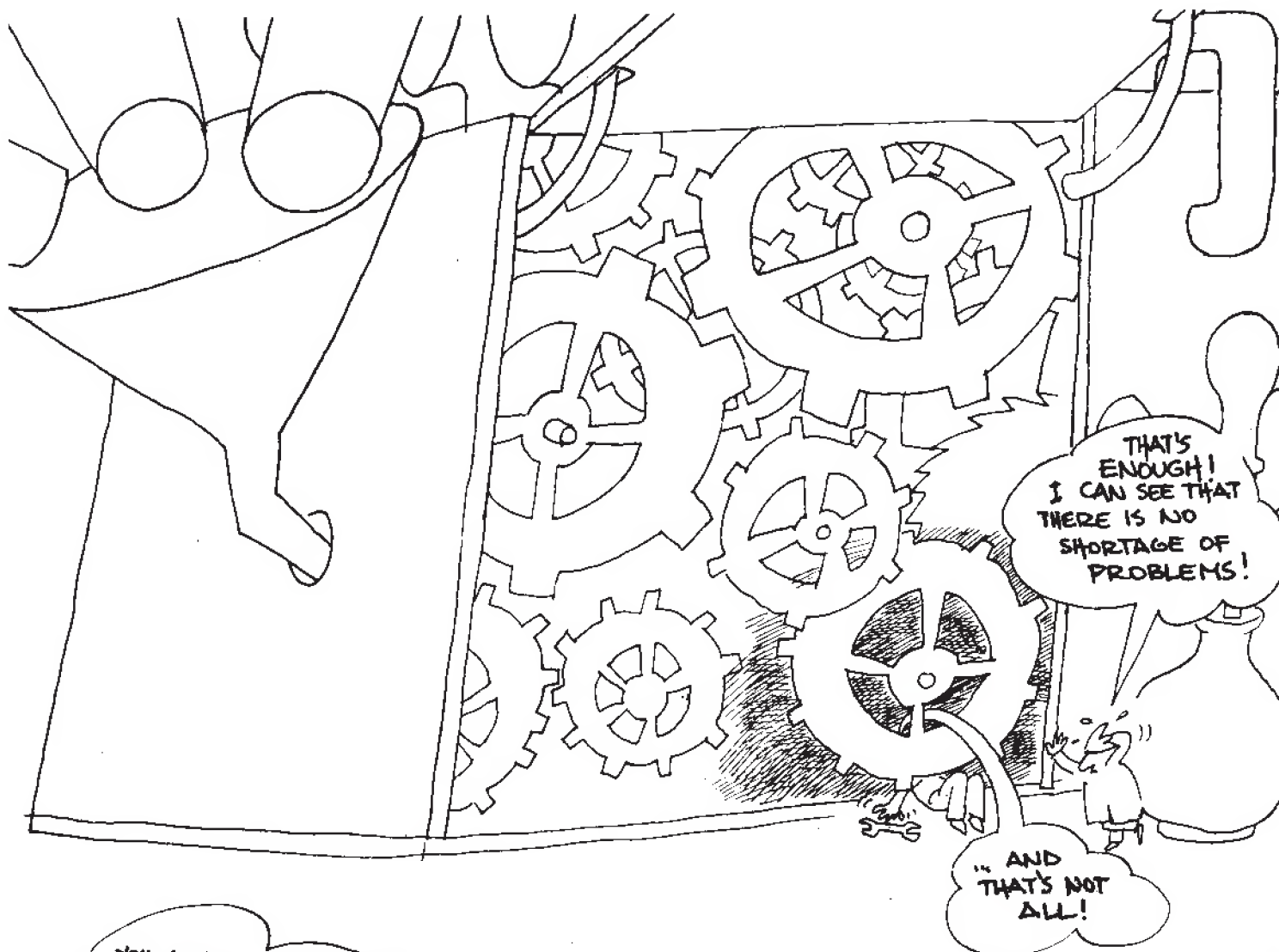
of them did stand out from the rest he was automatically marked down by the teachers to the level at which he ought to have been. In other words, the more progress he made, the more he was inappropriately ranked. Since it was not expected, his performance was considered undesirable. It merely upset the teacher's forecasts.

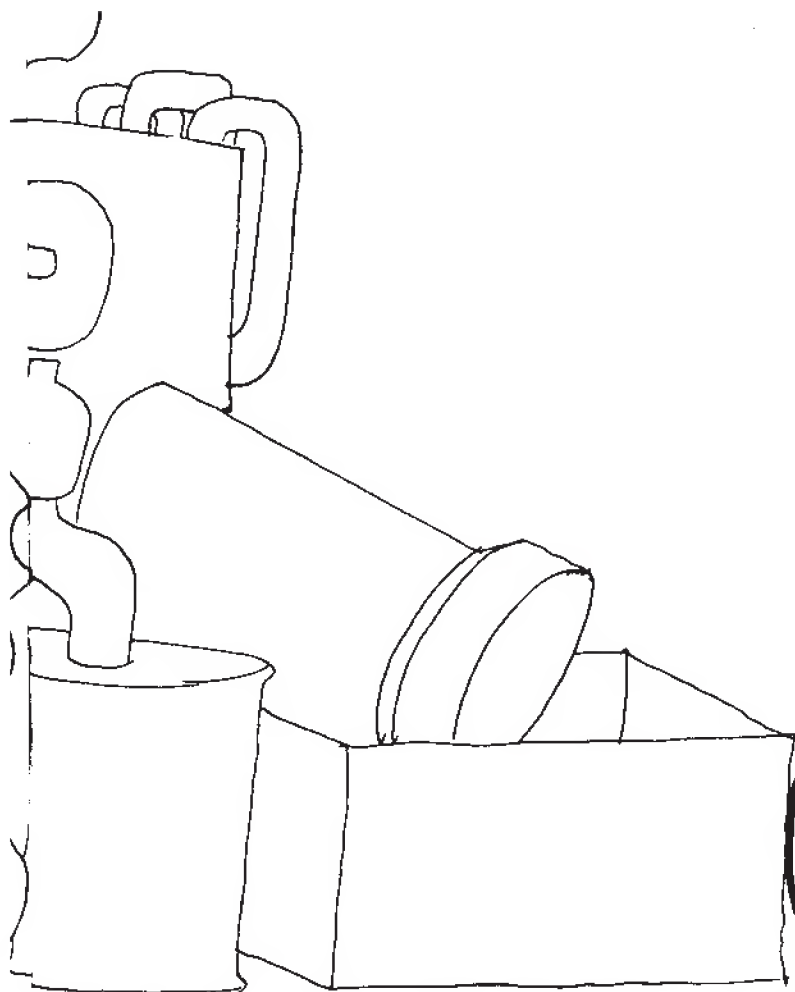
The investigation thus proved that, as in the case of the mice, the educator's artificial prejudices have a decisive influence on the behaviour of the pupil. In other words, good and bad pupils are creations of the teacher. The members of Professor Rosenthal's team thought for a time that the pupils whose names had been 'pinned' on the teachers had benefitted from more intense verbal communication with their teachers, which would have explained their progress. But they had to abandon this hypothesis. A study of the various successive tests showed that these children had progressed, not in verbal intelligence but in reasoned intelligence. It was an artificial designation alone that had transformed these potential 'dunces' into brilliant students.

In brief, the essential prerequisite for the success of a pupil or of a class is the teacher's belief in success. This would be the most economical reform of all. But also the most difficult to put into effect.

MARIELLA RIGHINI

- (1) Pygmalion in the classroom, by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobsen, Holt, Rinehart & Winston.





CHILDREN COME
TO SCHOOL CARRYING
INEQUALITY IN
THEIR SATCHELS TO
TREAT THEM EQUALLY
IS TO MANAGE AND
MAINTAIN
INEQUALITY
AND EVEN TO
INCREASE IT.

SCHWARTZ (6)

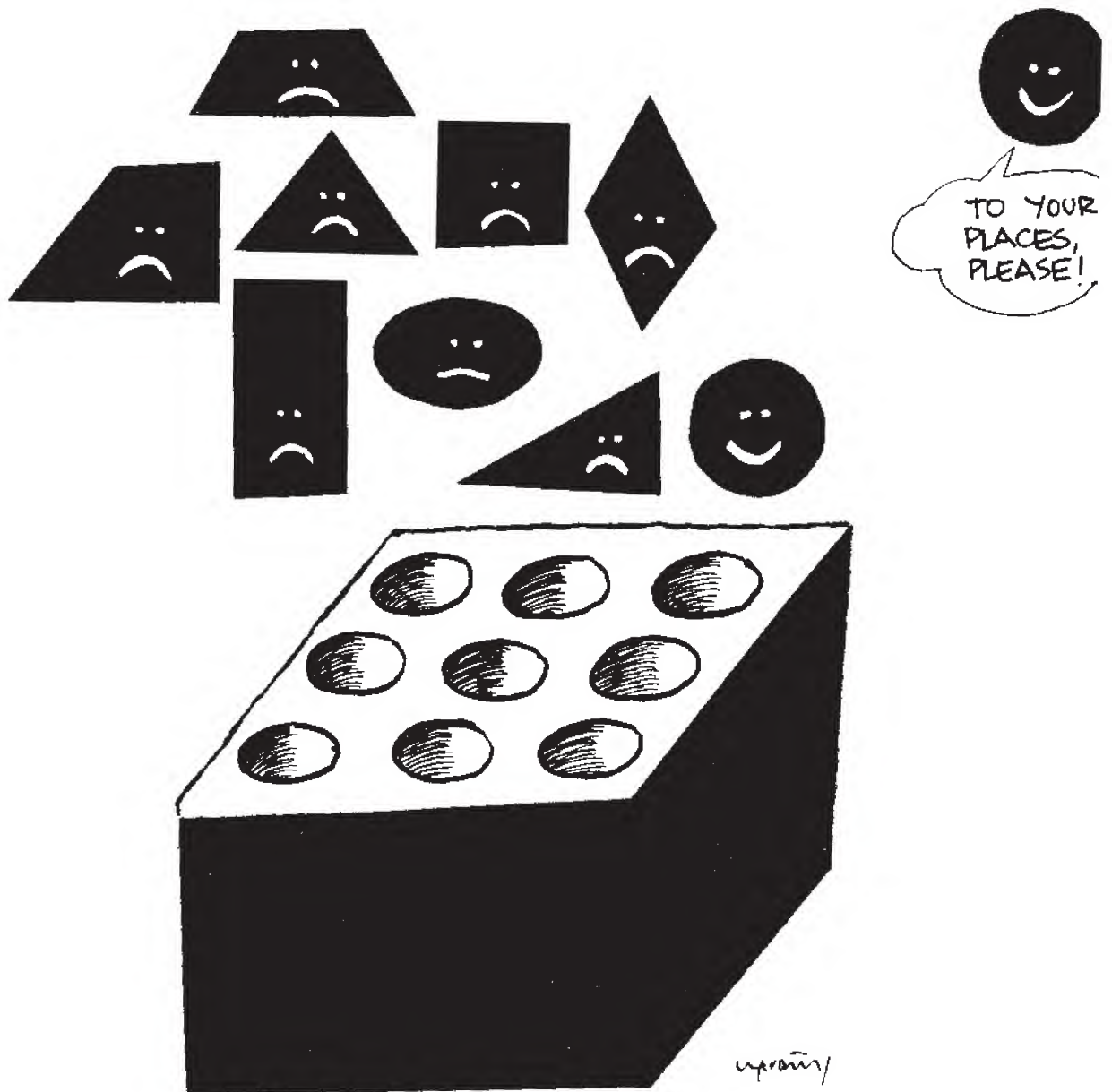
THAT IS EXACTLY THE
HEART OF THE PROBLEM!
THERE ARE VERY GREAT
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A
CHILD FROM A WELL-TO-DO
BACKGROUND AND A CHILD FROM
A WORKING-CLASS BACKGROUND



WHAT ARE THE
DIFFERENCES AT
THE OUTSET,
THEN?



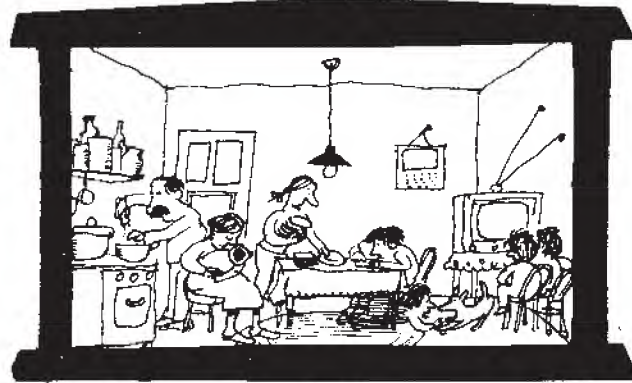
» The school takes no account of social
and cultural
differences

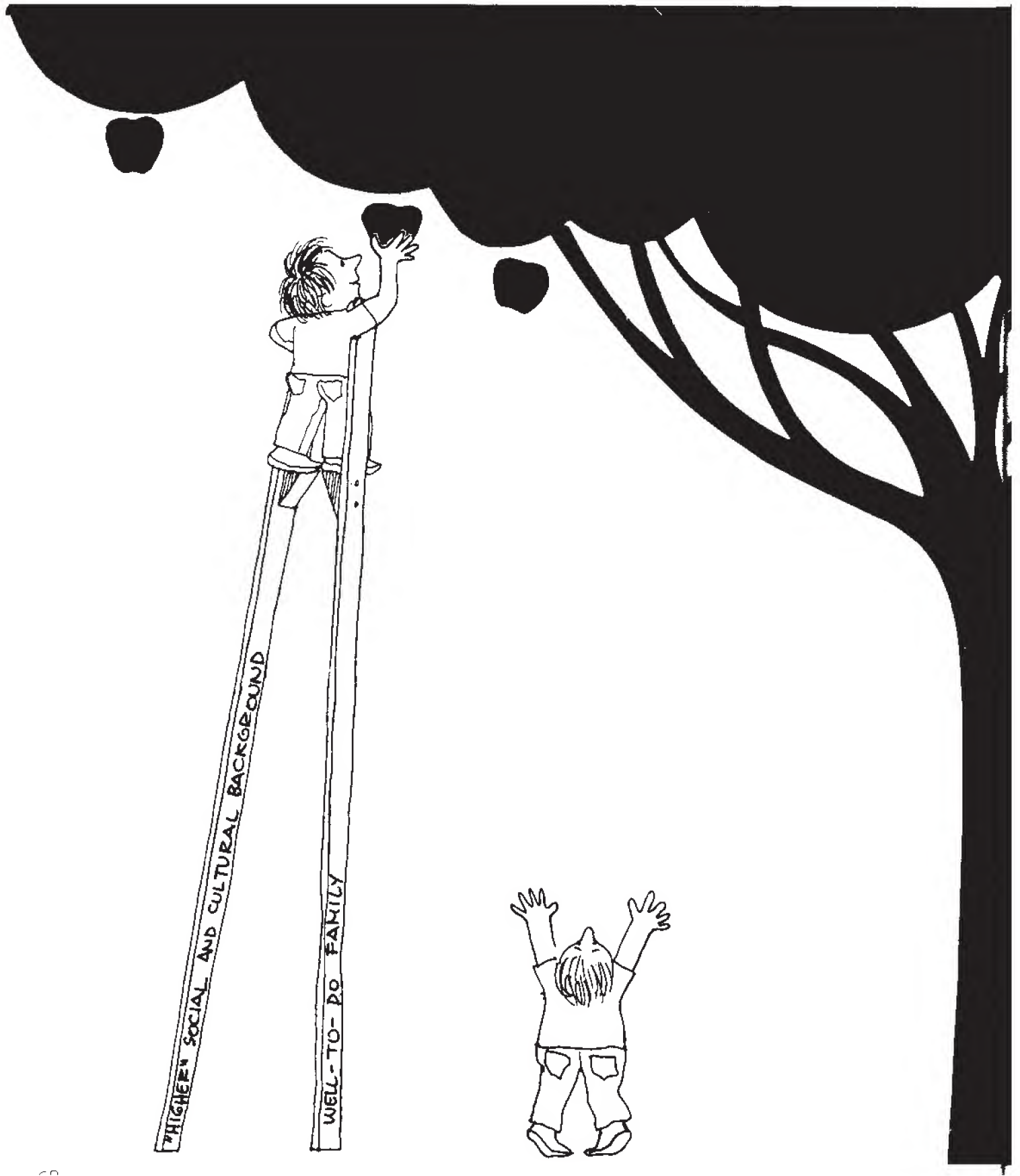




1. differences in the material conditions of existence

It is well known that living conditions, the place of residence, the neighbourhood, housing conditions and the time which parents can devote to their children all play an important part in ensuring a child's success during the early years at school, and are even more important when he has to choose between different paths (the time when income differences come especially into play).







2. differences in cultural background

A child going to school for the first time carries with him the experiences, attitudes, values, speech habits -- in other words, the CULTURE -- of his family, his social background; his intelligence, personality and emotions have developed through the absorption of these attitudes and values.

The culture of the school, however, is that of 'privileged' circles. Children of these social classes are accustomed to the same manner of speech as that required by the school; writing and books have formed part of their family world and have often been equated, since a very early age, with pleasure.

Because of this, these children will feel comfortable in the school, where they find the same speech, the same shelves full of books, the same culture. They will therefore have less of a feeling than others that they have been arbitrarily cut off from reality. They will accept school constraints more willingly and join more easily in the game of words, of abstract thought.

By contrast, children from a working-class background are bewildered by the speech, the customs, the academic values, all of which are too different from their own. In addition, they are at a disadvantage through not being able to use their speech idioms and their own experience. They are more put off than others by the lack of any direct meaning in their exercises and by the artificiality of the situations they experience in the classroom.

And this feeling of being uncomfortable, which may go as far as insubordination, often takes the form of awkwardness, reticence and the progressive emergence of a situation of failure.



3. differences in life experiences outside the school

Children and young people enrich their lives by various experiences and knowledge gained outside the school.

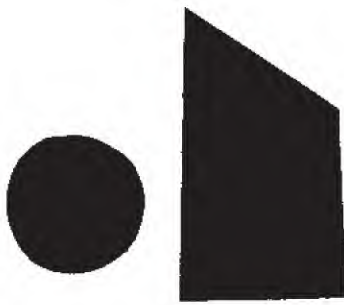
But this experience and knowledge varies widely depending on the child's background, and it often happens that it is the children from what are called privileged backgrounds who can cash in on these attainments at school.

Reading, travel, theatre visits or TV programmes chosen in accordance with the criteria of 'cultivated' culture are intellectual baggage which can weigh heavily in favour of success at school.

WHEREAS OTHER EXPERIENCES,
THOUGH EQUALLY RICH, WILL BE
USELESS AT SCHOOL







4. differences in parents' attitudes to school

Educated parents have a familiarity with schools which is completely lacking in other parents.

They also have greater aspirations for their children; for some of them, a university career is more or less the normal thing.

If the child does not do well, the parents do everything possible to halt the machinery of failure: appeals to teachers, help at home, special coaching and, if necessary, transfer to a private school; in short, they are able to fight the school's verdict.

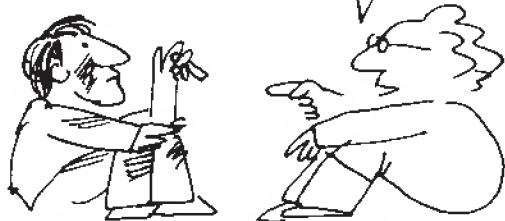
One secondary school principal even wrote to us: "The Constitution cannot guarantee equal mental development, equal academic aptitude for all." But would he ever say that of his own son? Wouldn't he force him to complete his secondary studies? Would he send him out to be a labourer?

Bourgeois parents, too, have difficult children. But they get them out of trouble.

BARBIANA (7)

FOR THE POOREST PARENTS, it is true that the school also represents a means of social advancement. But on the one hand, their ambition for their children is often less. On the other hand they usually feel defenceless against a school they are afraid to confront and whose judgement they scarcely dare question. So they permit failure more easily; then, when the time for selection comes, they will have less difficulty in resigning themselves to a short school career, in other words, to a shrinking of their children's professional horizons.

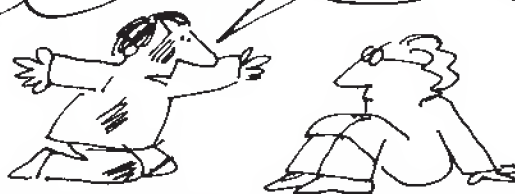
SO, IF I HAVE UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY,
SOME CHILDREN ARE UNLUCKY - LACK
OF RESOURCES IN THE FAMILY, POOR SPEECH
AND CULTURE ... IN SHORT, THEY
ARE HANDICAPPED. SO IT'S
NORMAL, THAT THEY SHOULD
FAIL AT SCHOOL!



NO, MY FRIEND, YOU HAVE NOT
UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY!
YOU CLAIM THAT THE CHILDREN
OF WORKING CLASS FAMILIES
REALLY SUFFER FROM A CULTURAL
HANDICAP, THAT THEIR INTELLECTUAL
AND LINGUISTIC RESOURCES ARE
INFERIOR TO THOSE OF
OTHER CHILDREN ...



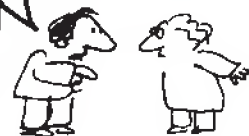
BEFORE YOU EXPLAINED THESE CHILDREN'S FAILURE
BY INDIVIDUAL FAULTS AND DEFICITS - LACK OF GIFTS,
EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS, CHARACTER FAULTS - NOW YOU
ARE TRANSFERRING THIS EXPLANATION TO THE GROUP!
YOU ARGUE THAT THERE ARE FAULTS AND DEFICITS
THAT ARE INHERENT IN AN ENTIRE SOCIAL CLASS:
POVERTY OF LANGUAGE, INABILITY TO THINK IN ABSTRACT
TERMS, AND HEAVEN KNOWS WHAT ELSE

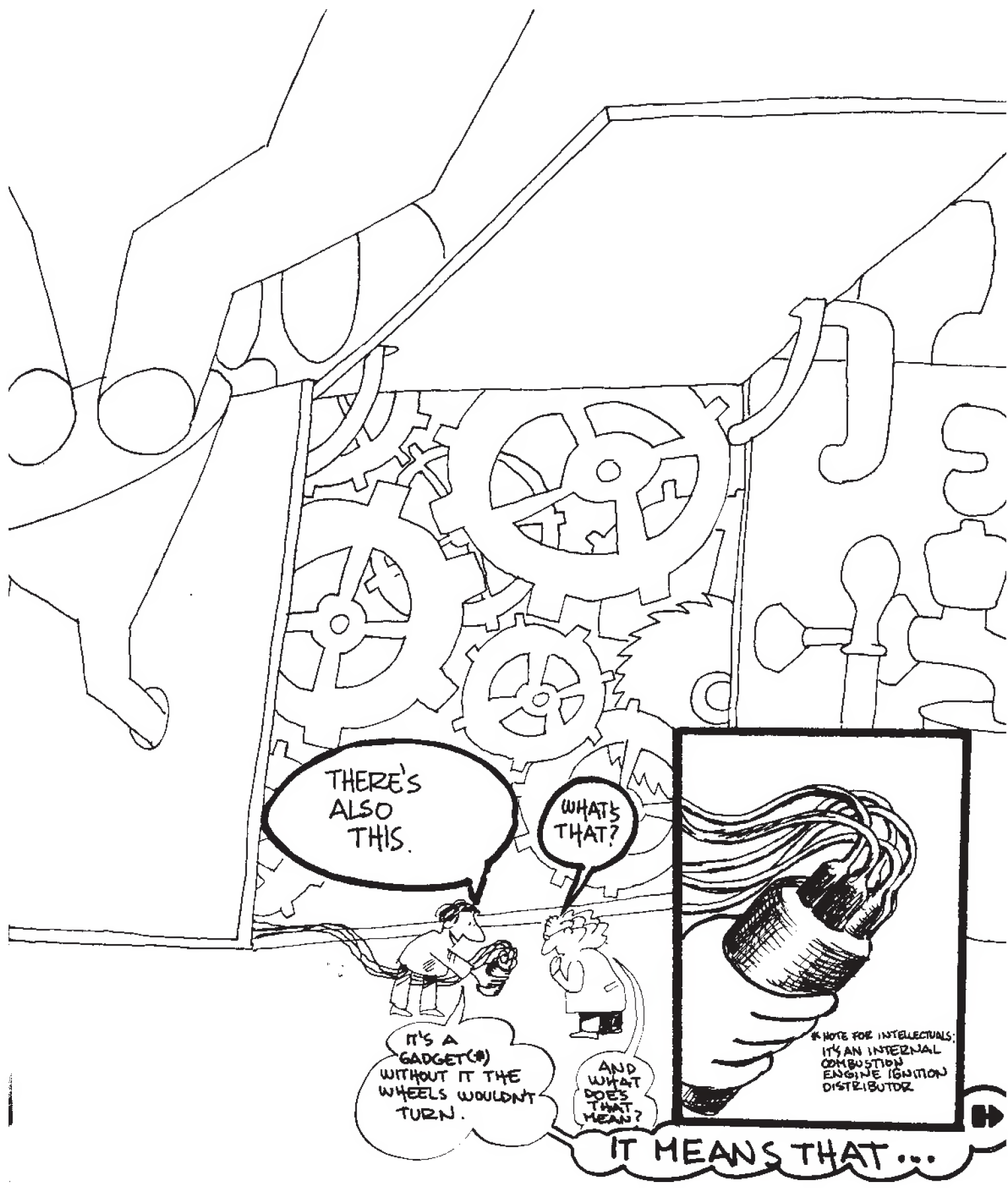


AND IN BOTH CASES, YOU,
RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE
RESTS WITH THE CHILD OR HIS
FAMILY. ACCORDING TO YOU,
THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY
HAVE NOTHING TO DO
WITH IT.

THIS INTERPRETATION LEAVES OUT THE
MAIN POINT: IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE
THE SCHOOL IMPOSES A SINGLE CULTURE,
TO THE DETRIMENT OF OTHERS, THAT IT PLACES
CHILDREN WHO DO NOT BELONG TO THAT
CULTURE AT A DISADVANTAGE.

THE ONLY HANDICAP IS IN
THE RELATION
TO AN IMPOSED
AND DOMINANT
CULTURE





THERE'S
ALSO
THIS.

WHAT'S
THAT?

IT'S A
GADGET(?)
WITHOUT IT THE
WHEELS WOULDN'T
TURN.

AND
WHAT
DOES
THAT
MEAN?

IT MEANS THAT...

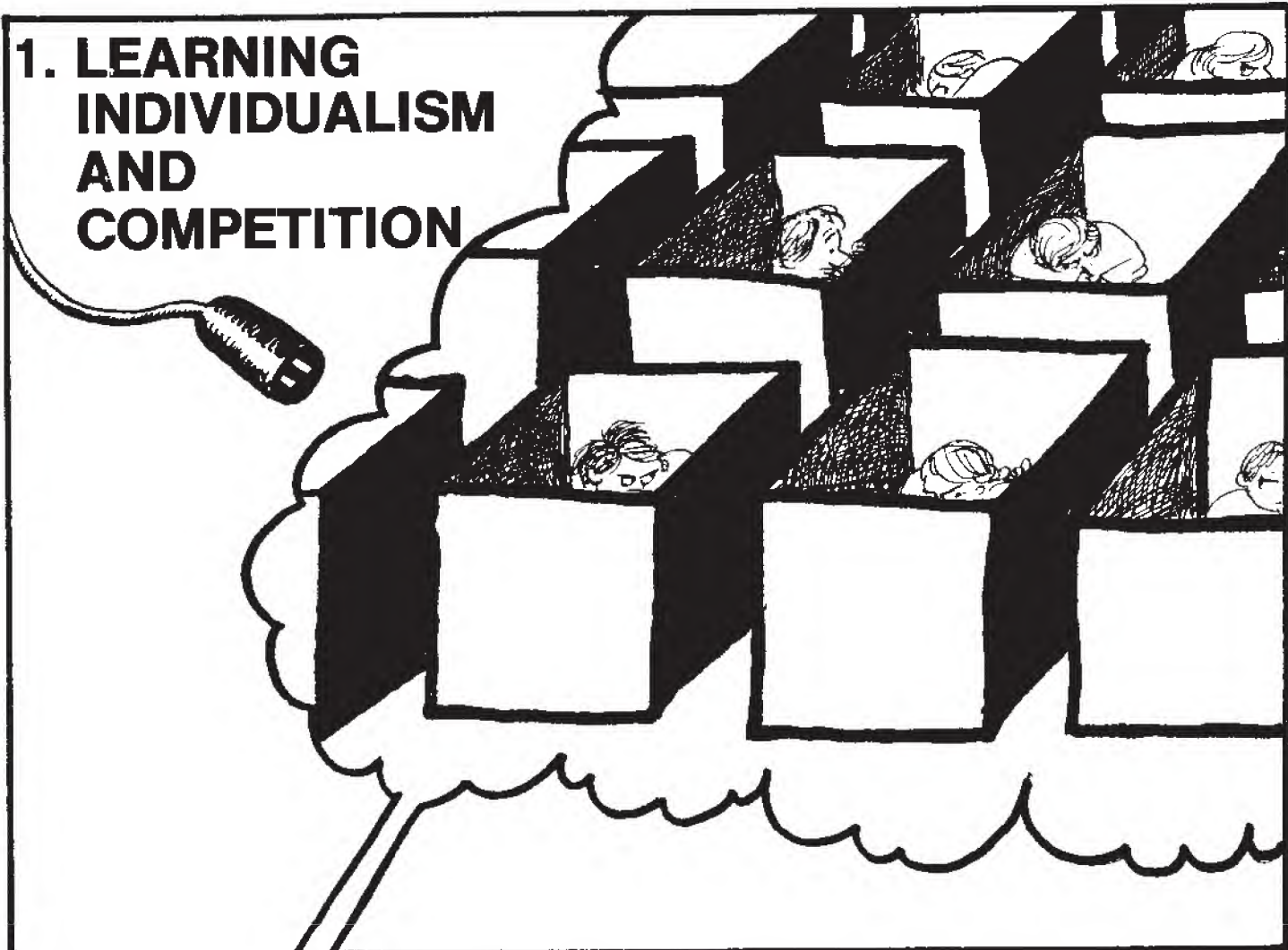


*NOTE FOR INTELLECTUALS:
IT'S AN INTERNAL
COMBUSTION
ENGINE IGNITION
DISTRIBUTOR

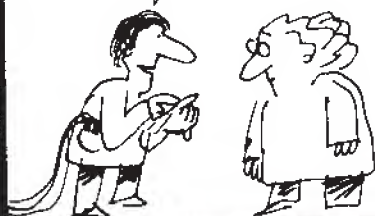
► ...THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE BESIDES
MECHANISMS. AT SCHOOL YOU NOT
ONLY ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE... YOU
ALSO LEARN BEHAVIOURAL
VALUES AND STANDARDS



1. LEARNING INDIVIDUALISM AND COMPETITION



FOR EXAMPLE,
PROHIBITING CHILDREN
TO TALK TO ONE ANOTHER
IN CLASS.
COMMUNICATION
EQUALS
CHEATING...



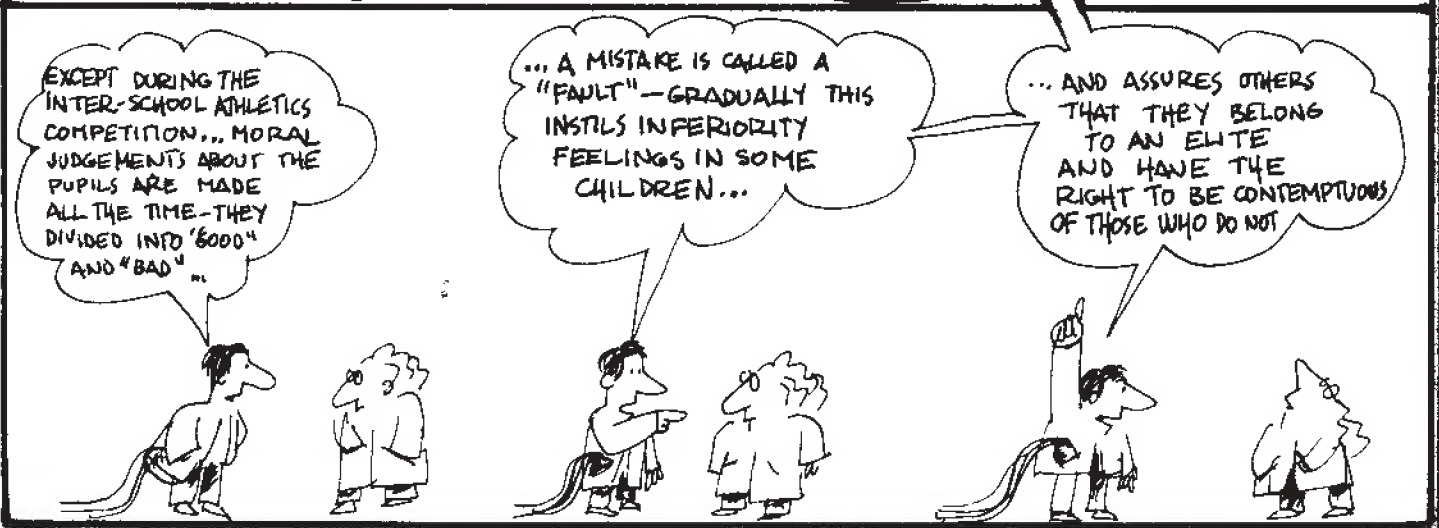
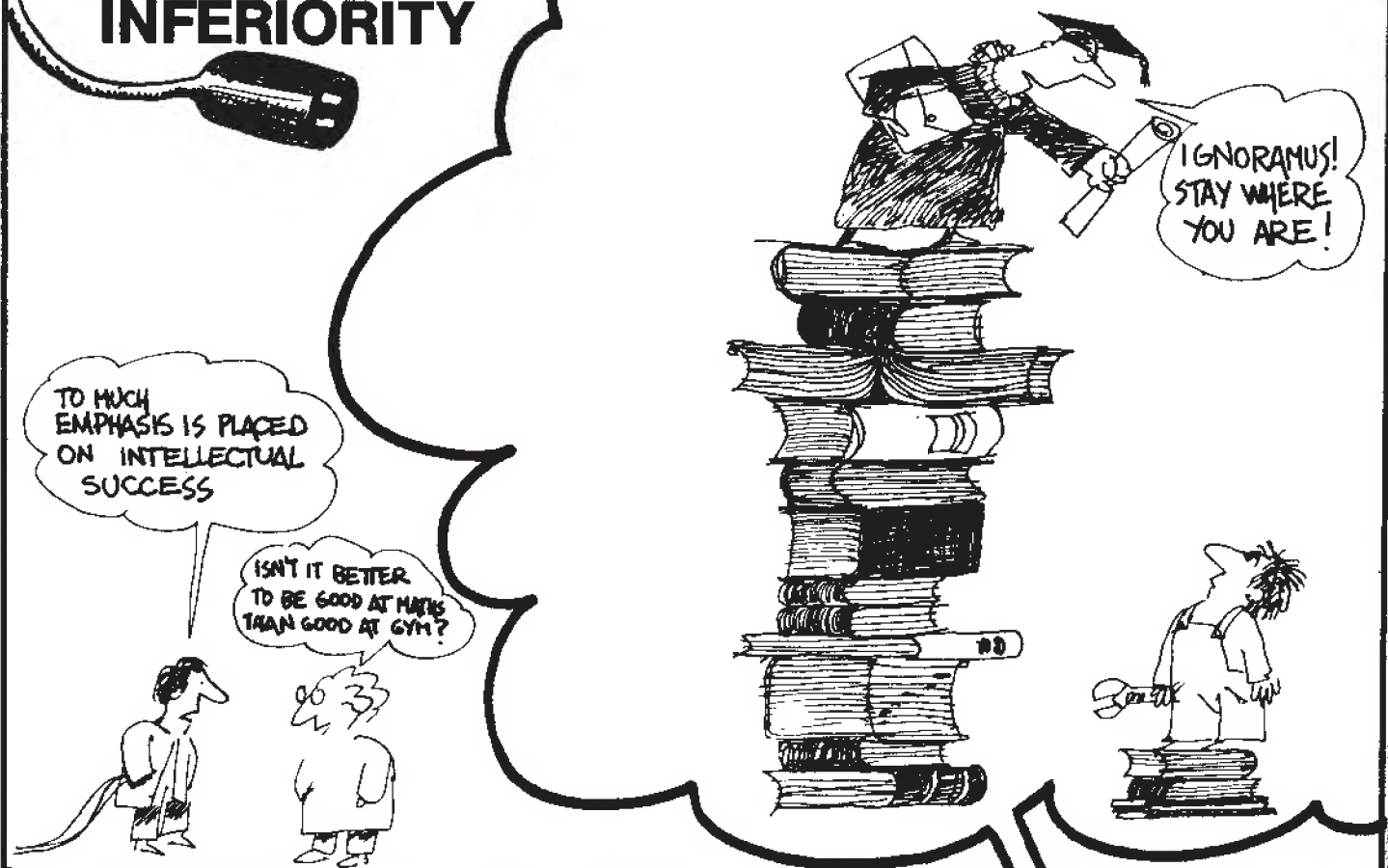
FAVOURING INDIVIDUAL
EFFORT, WORK AND
SUCCESS OVER TEAMWORK,
SOLIDARITY AND
CO-OPERATION



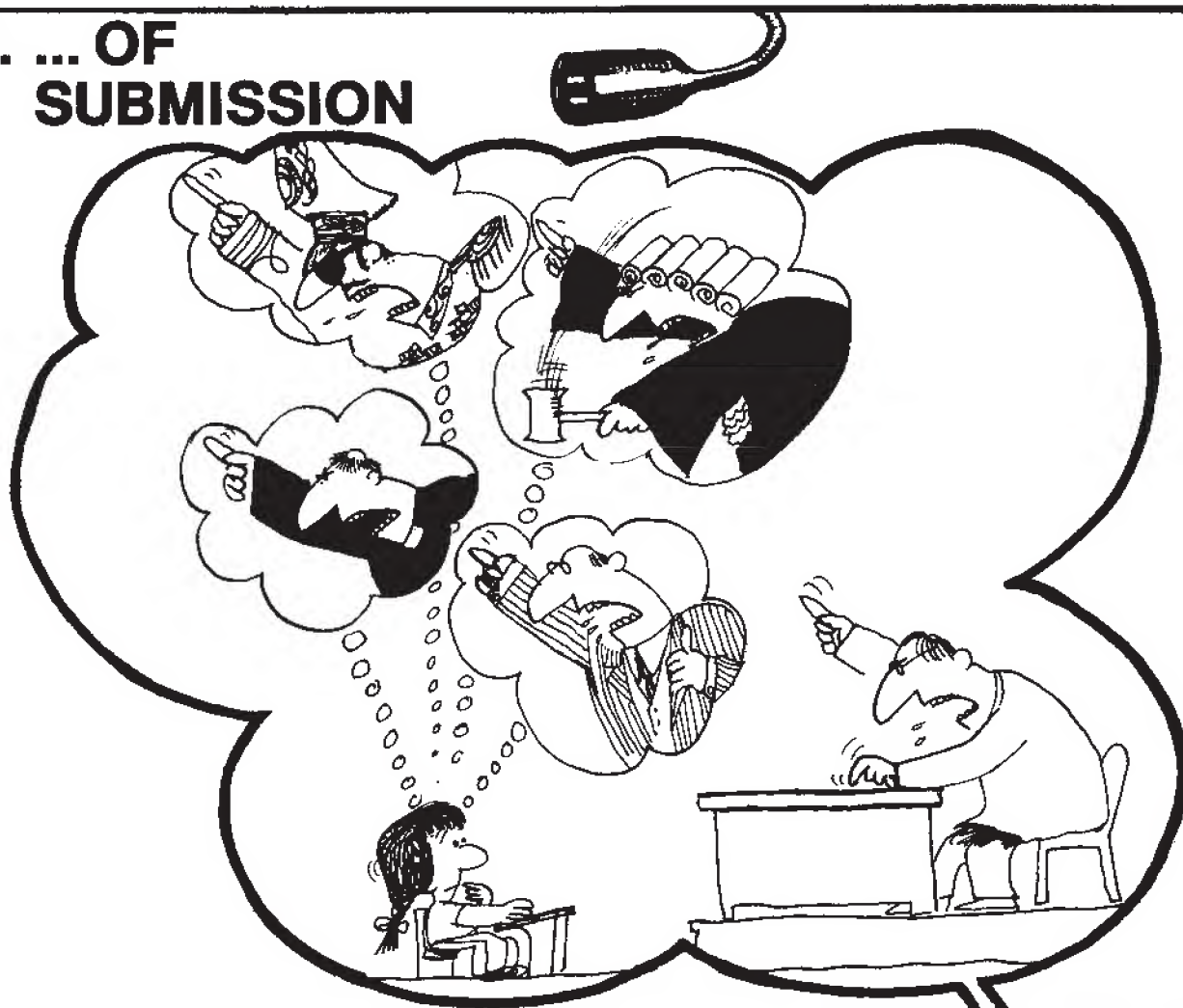
... MEANS INCULCATING
INDIVIDUALISM,
MISTRUST OF
OTHERS



2. LEARNING FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY



3. ... OF SUBMISSION



THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER,
WHO SITS BY HIMSELF...



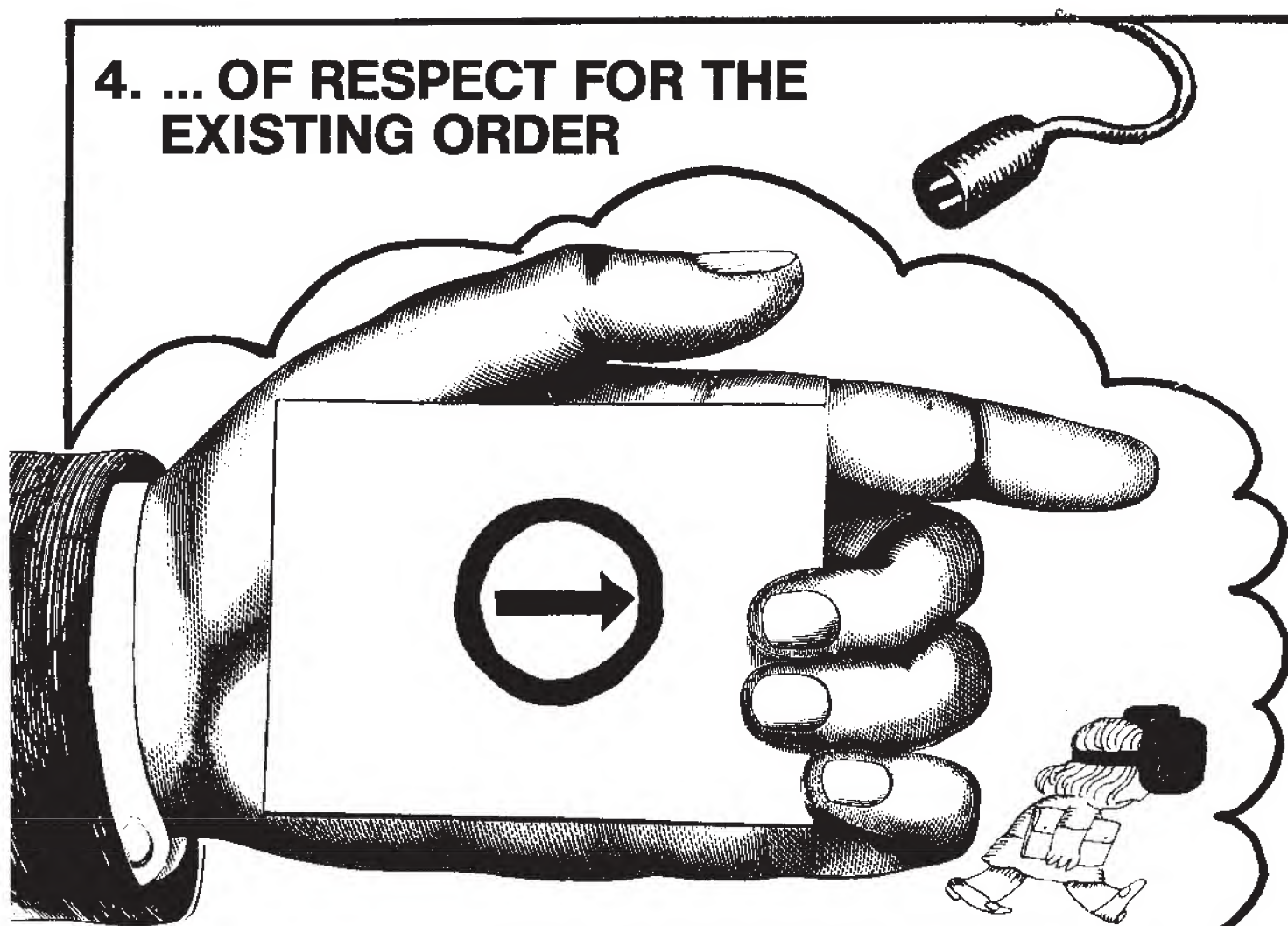
... AND IS THE ABSOLUTE
AUTHORITY, IN THE END
INSTILLS SUBMISSION ...



... AND MAKES THE
PUPILS FAMILIAR WITH
THE EXISTENCE OF
A HIERARCHY, THE NEED
FOR A LEADER.



4. ... OF RESPECT FOR THE EXISTING ORDER



THROUGH EVERYDAY PRACTICES, PUPILS ARE ACCUSTOMED TO THE IDEA THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE METHOD, ONLY ONE TRUTH, ONLY ONE SOLUTION."

WHICH ONES?

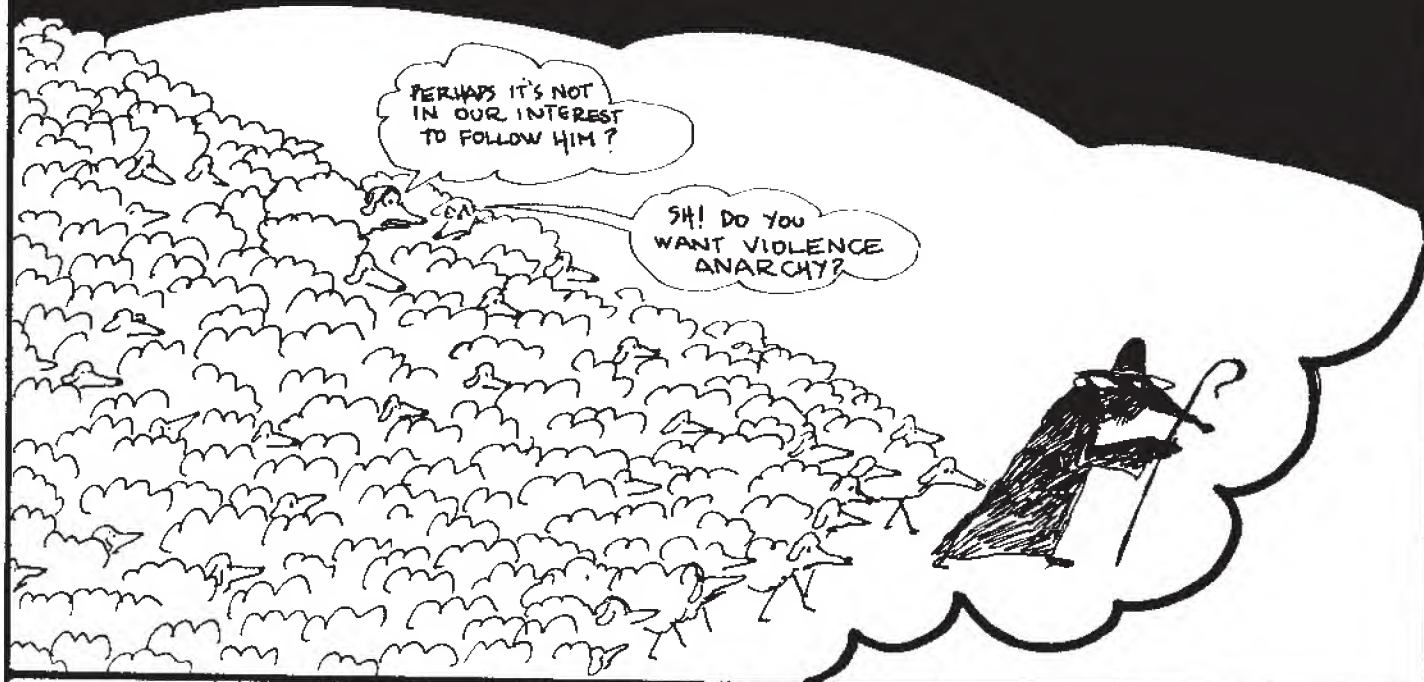
"THE ONES EXPOUNDED BY THE TEACHER. THE PUPIL IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE SELECTIVE OR TO IMAGINE ALTERNATIVES

THAT'S GOOD! EVERYTHING IS THOUGHT OUT IN ADVANCE THEN, ISN'T IT?

NO, THAT IS NOT GOOD. IT LEADS TO ABSORPTION OF THE STATUS QUO, THE ORDER ESTABLISHED BY OTHERS

IF THEY DON'T LIKE, ALL THEY HAVE TO DO IS TO CHANGE IT

5. ... OF FEAR OF CONFLICT



PERHAPS IT'S NOT
IN OUR INTEREST
TO FOLLOW HIM?

SH! DO YOU
WANT VIOLENCE
ANARCHY?

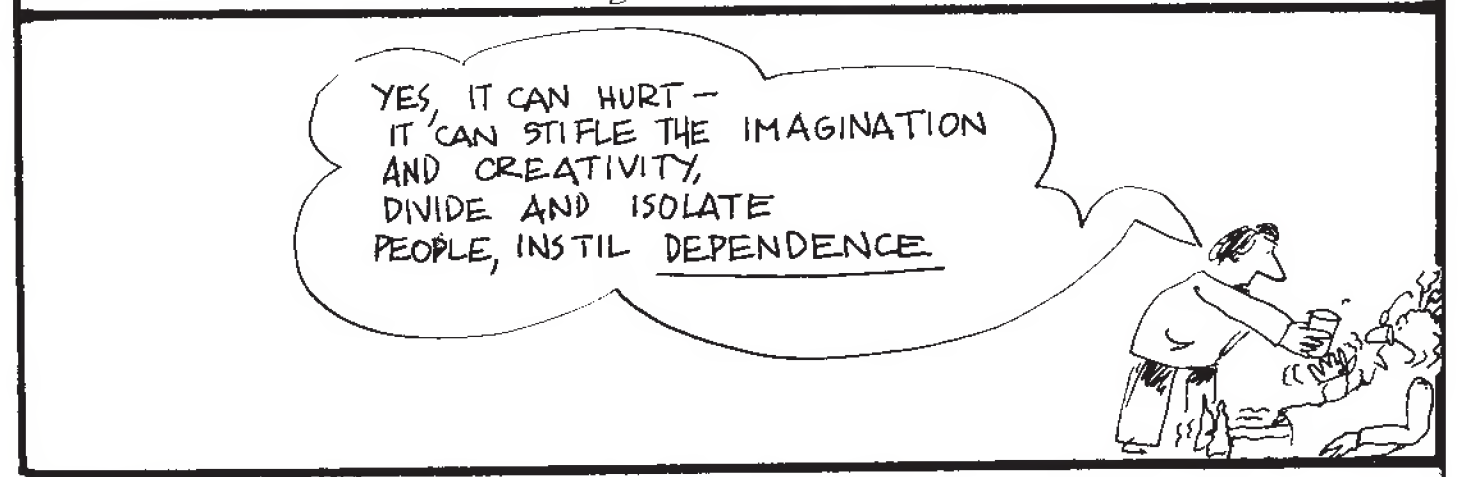
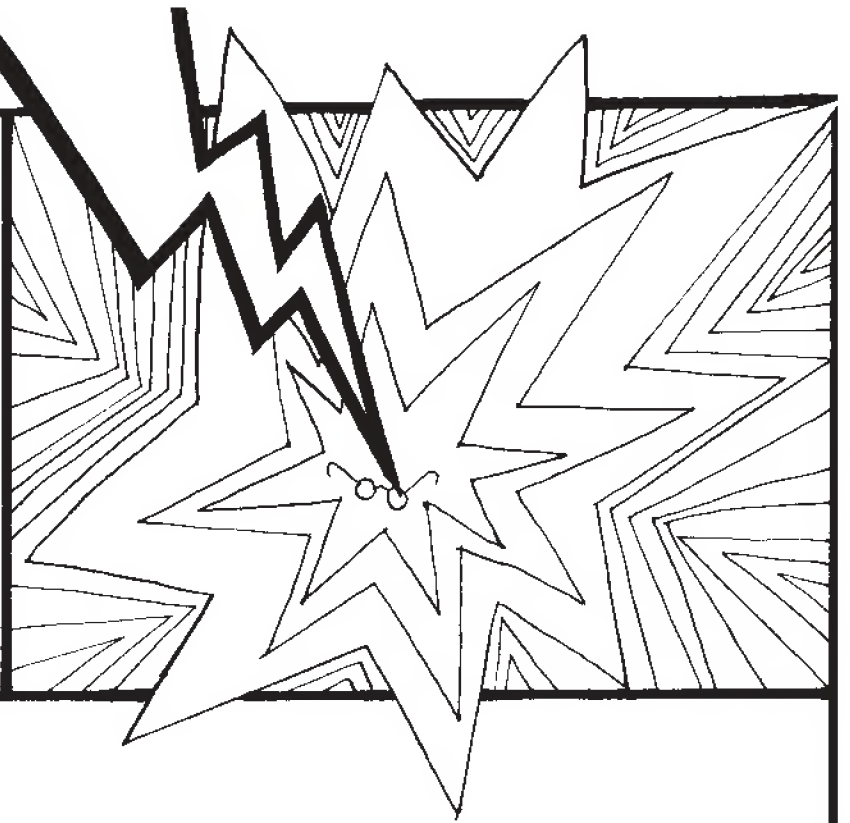
QUESTIONING IT
WOULD INVOLVE
CONFLICTS —
PEOPLE ARE
AFRAID...

CONFLICTS?!
I HATE
THEM!!

... FEAR OF CONFLICT, OF
CONFRONTATION IS A
FEATURE OF SCHOOL LIFE —
CONFLICTS ARE
HIDDEN, AVOIDED!

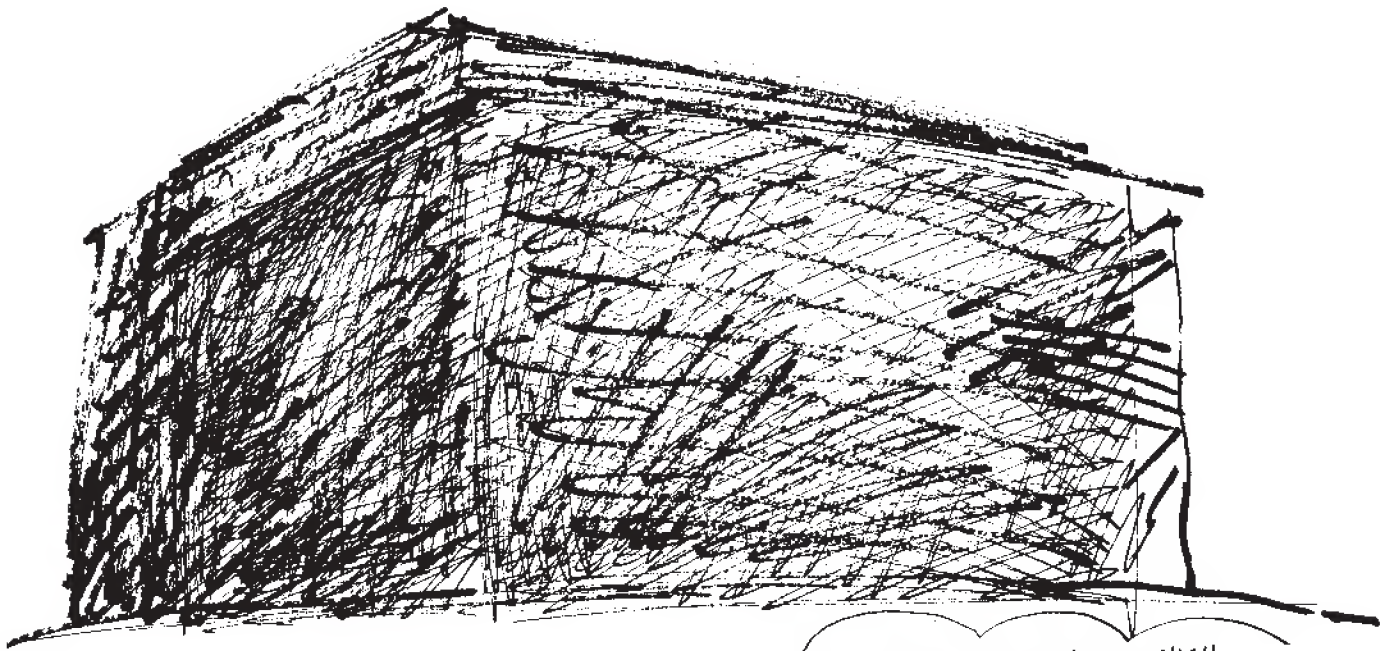
REMEMBER: "NO
POLITICS IN SCHOOL" — AS
IF THE SCHOOL ITSELF
WAS NOT A POLITICAL
FACT! ...





School does not teach us how to speak a foreign language or even how to speak our own language; how to sing or to use our hands and feet; how to keep a healthy diet; how to make our way through the jungle of institutions; how to care for someone who is ill or to look after a baby. If people no longer sing but buy millions of records of professionals singing for them; if they don't know about good food habits but pay the doctor and the pharmaceutical industry to treat the effects of an unhealthy diet; if they don't know how to bring up their children but hire the services of 'nannies' with a State diploma; if they don't know how to repair a radio set or a tap, treat a sprain, cure the flu without medicines, grow lettuce etc., it is because the school has the unacknowledged mission of providing tailor-made workers, consumers, clients and subjects of administration for industry, commerce, the professions and the State.

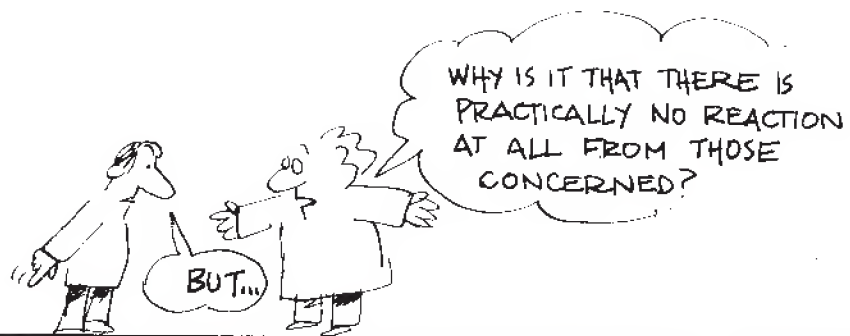




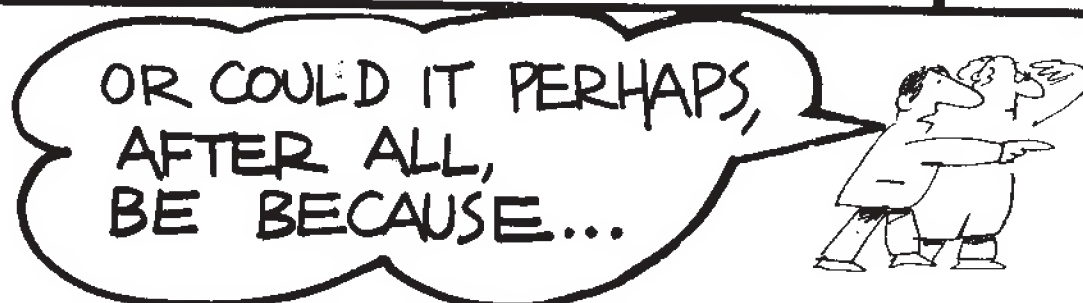
SO THEN THIS SCHOOL, WHICH
WAS MEANT TO PROVIDE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR
ALL, MERELY REPRODUCES
THE INEQUALITY
BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASSES?



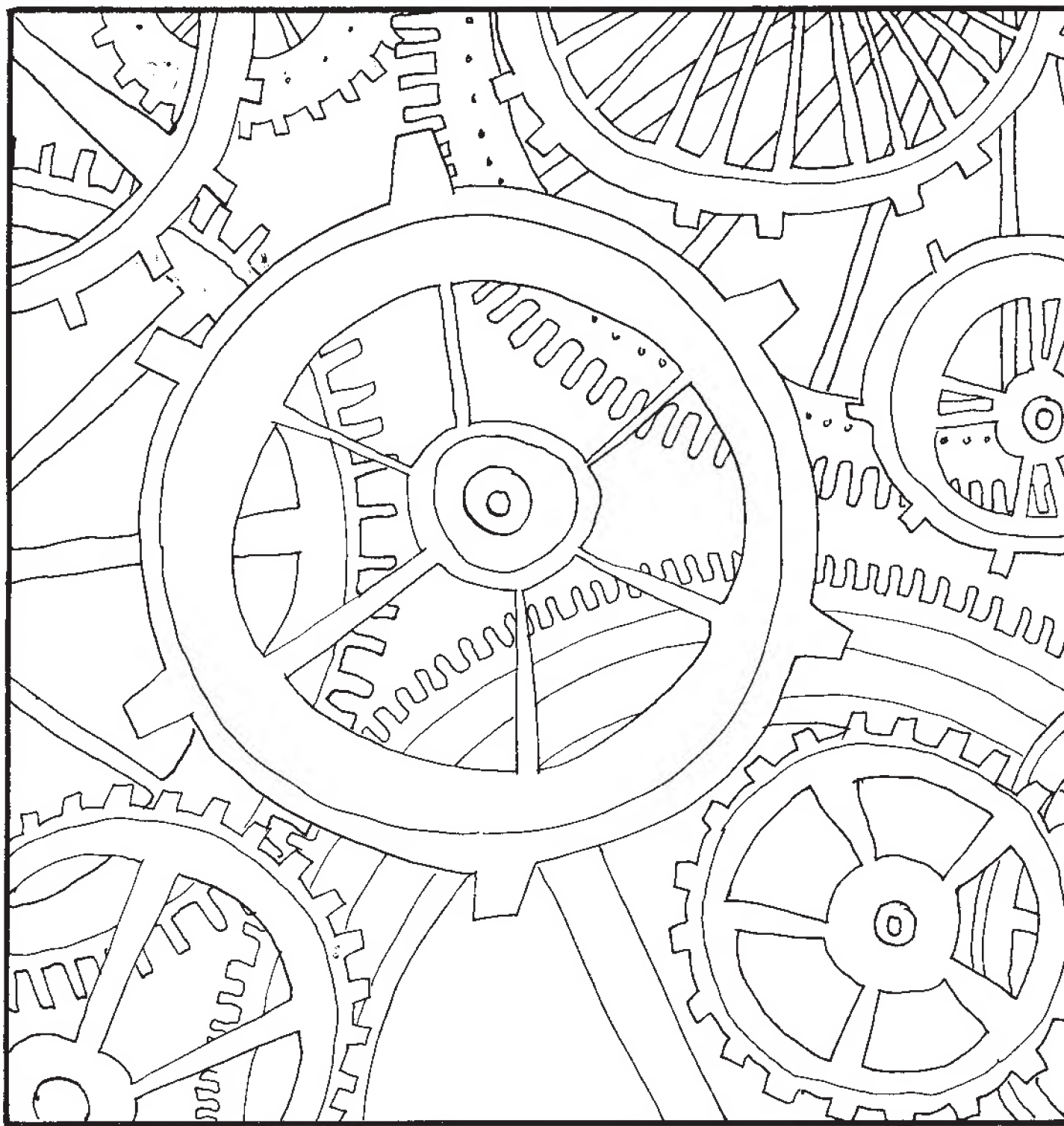
THIS SCHOOL WHICH WE HOPED WOULD
BRING EMANCIPATION
AND LIBERATION IS IN
REALITY MERELY AN EXPERIENCE
OF DEPENDENCY?



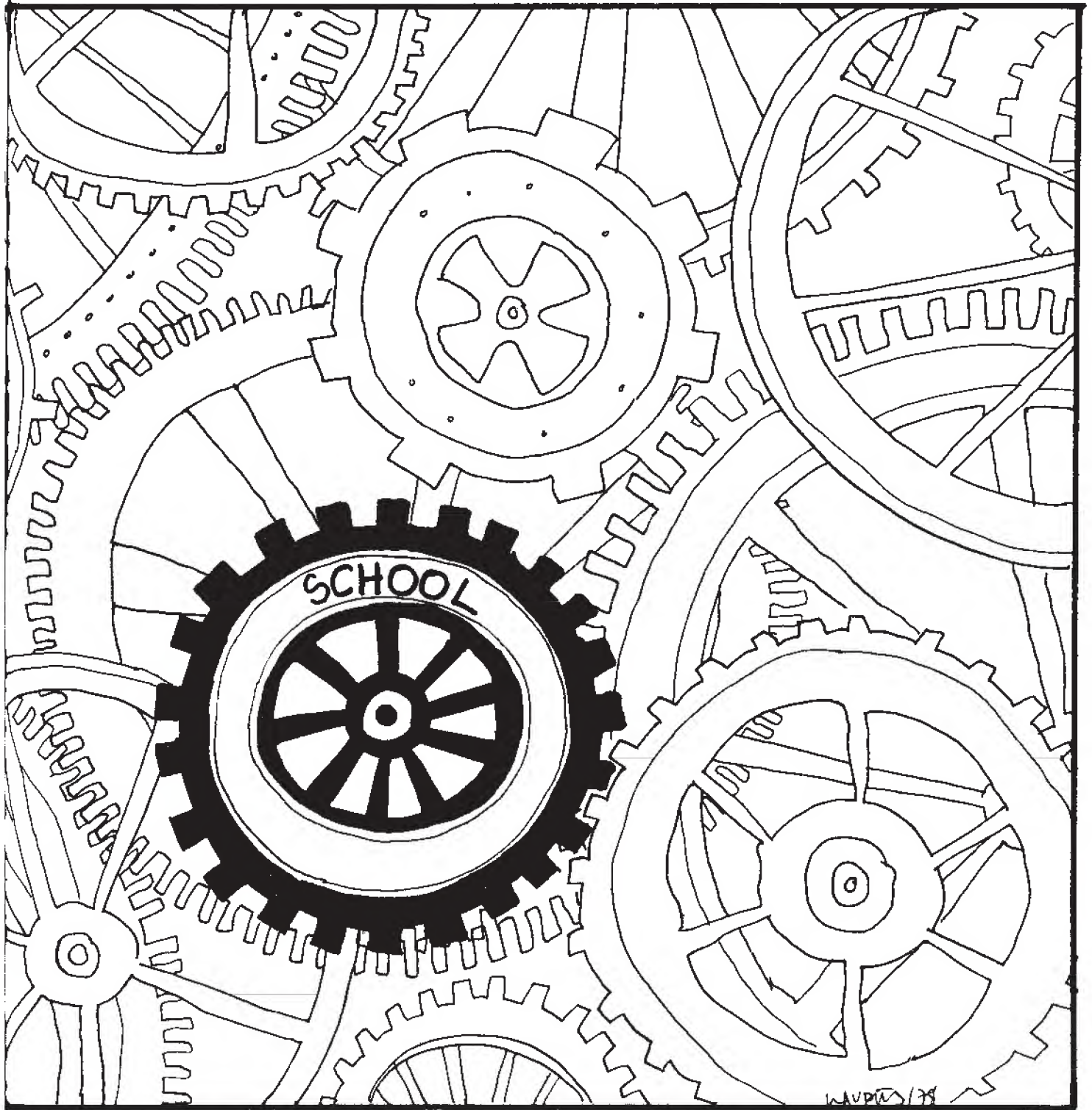
| the pupils | the parents | the teachers |
|--|---|---|
| <p>have they any power to bring about change ?</p> | <p>aren't they afraid to attack an institution which will decide what qualifications their children are to have ?</p> <p>aren't those who are placed at a disadvantage by the system -- industrial and agricultural workers from whom you might expect a mass reaction -- victims of the all too facile explanations given of failures at school (lack of talent, laziness) ?</p> <p>aren't they blinded by the individual success of a tiny minority from among their ranks, carefully 'played up' in order to weaken the statistics ?</p> | <p>have they as individuals any other choice than the choice between submitting to the system or submitting their resignation ?</p> |



► ...THE SCHOOL IS ITSELF MERELY



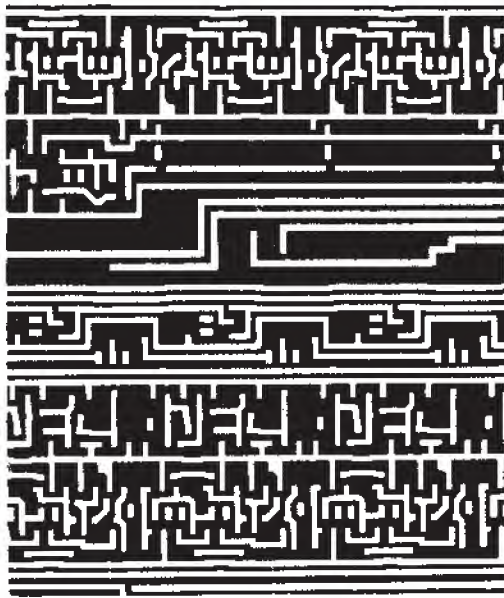
A COG AMONG OTHERS ?



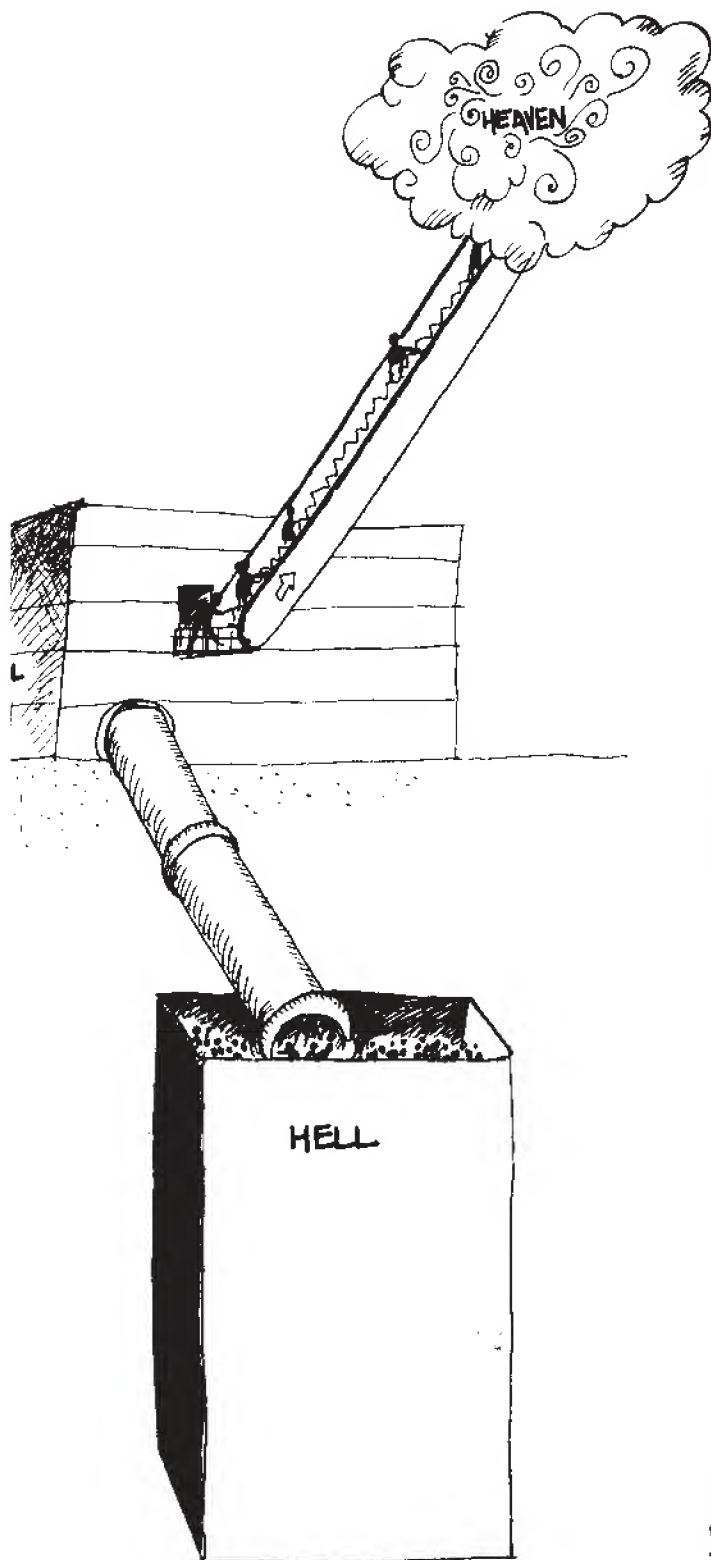
A COG AMONG OTHERS?



It might be said that this has always been the case and cannot be otherwise. The purpose of education in all societies is to prepare new generations for adult life, for life in the world of adults.



But it is also true that it is above all the requirements of the system of production, and the modes of production, that determines, at each moment in history and in each social context, what knowledge should be acquired and what values and behavioural patterns should be instilled.



But the organization of labour and social life in our industrial societies is based on the separation of intellectual design and management functions on the one hand, and the pure and simple tasks to be carried out, on the other.

This separation, which is discreetly called 'social and technical division of labour', lies at the heart of the division of society into two categories :

at the top, the minority who educate, administer and invent new knowledge, and therefore need highly specialized skills;

at the bottom, the majority of workers in factories, offices and shops, who are required to perform tasks laid down by others, sometimes arduous, often monotonous, which do not require advanced skills.

Subjected to this logic governing the division of labour, the school -- by its mechanisms of selection and exclusion -- reflects and strengthens the division of society into a hierarchy

on the one hand, through universities and technical colleges, it trains these super-skilled specialists -- research workers, engineers, planners, teachers or doctors -- whose competence will determine the fate of the others and the 'progress' of all;

on the other, as long as there are unskilled jobs or jobs requiring minimum skills, the school will also produce 'failures'. In other words, those who, having failed in their studies and having been convinced of their inferiority, will have no other alternative but to take the least interesting and hence, 'naturally', the lowest-paid jobs.

In our hierarchical and unequal society, the output of school 'failures' is as important as the output of graduates.



What we call 'education' today is a consumer good: it is a product manufactured by an official institution called a 'school'.

The more education a person 'consumes', the more fruitful he makes his future and rises in the hierarchy of capitalists of knowledge. Education establishes a new class pyramid to the extent that the major consumers of knowledge can subsequently claim to render more valuable services to their society.

Illich

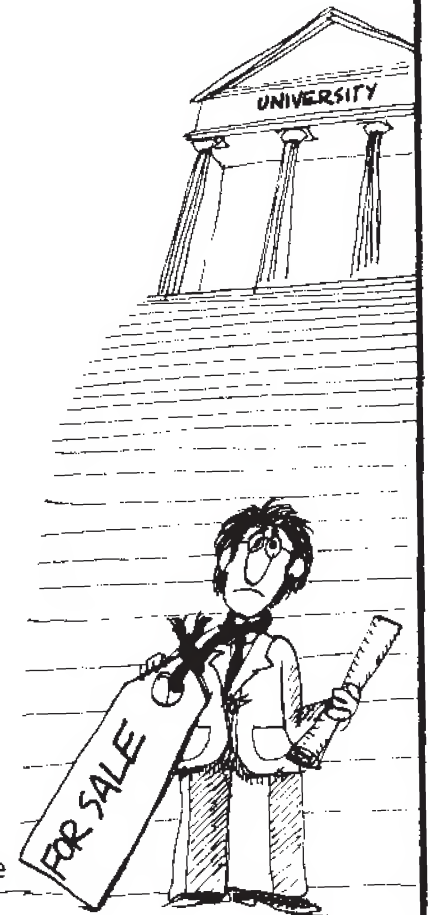
By providing knowledge and diplomas to some but not to others, by favouring a single form of culture, that of the privileged, over that of the working classes, by convincing everyone of the justice of the selection process, the school makes it appear quite normal and inevitable that society should be split in two, that there should be a division between the minority which thinks, orders, administers and controls, and the majority which carries out orders, obeys and submits.

And the school succeeds in doing this by untiringly teaching us that the specialist is the only one who knows, that only knowledge brings power, and that the acquisition of this knowledge depends on the number of years each pupil spends at school.

One might then wonder what purpose school serves for the majority of people who do not go on to higher education. Do they learn something useful before being sent back to the 'world of labour' ?

What they all learn is that you can do nothing by yourself or with others, with what is taught at school, since school qualifications are of no help whatsoever in improving our daily life or satisfying our most basic needs. In the final analysis, these qualifications -- if you have them -- enable us only to sell our own working capacity for a little more on the labour market.

With the proceeds of this sale of our own labour, which has itself become a commodity, we can then buy the services of a multitude of specialists on whom we have to depend for such simple and essential things as health care, nutrition, information, communication with others, recreation, etc.



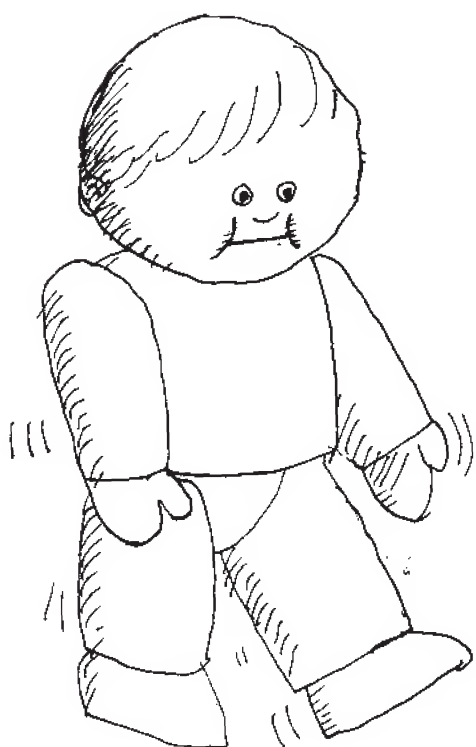
And so,
by going through
the experience
of inequality
and dependence,
we end up
by losing our
capacity to work,
to create,
to live together.
We end up
by losing all ability
to take a critical view
of reality,
all power to take stands
and to create
alternatives.



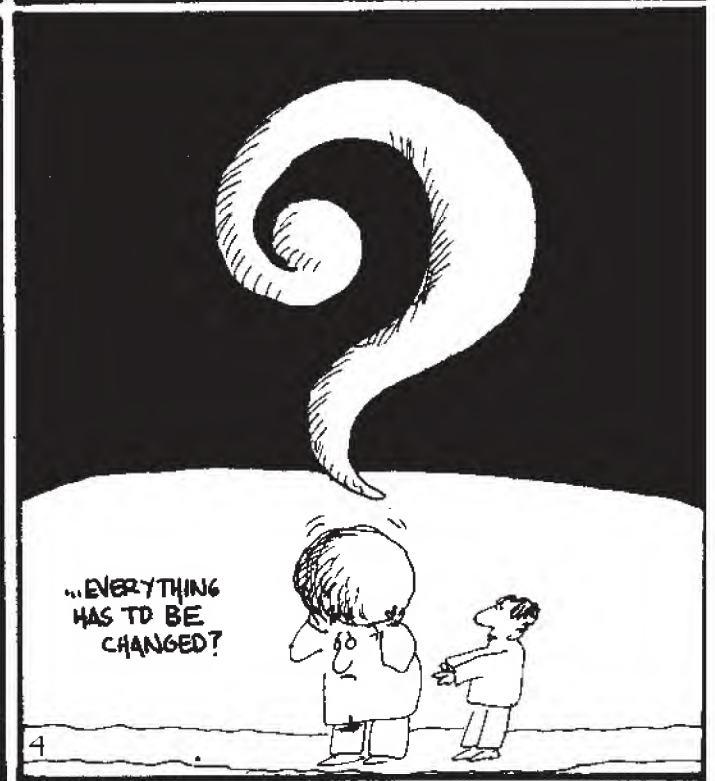
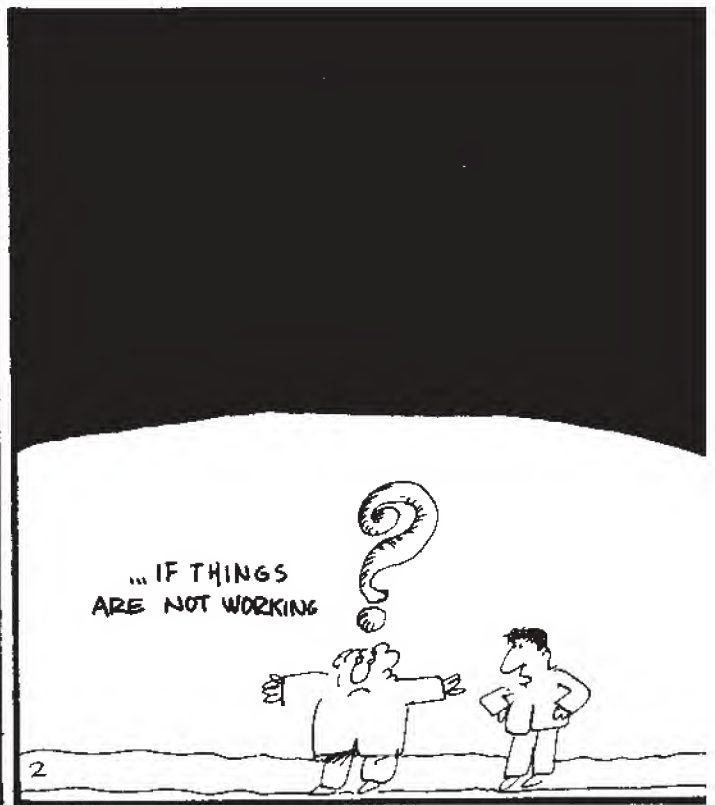
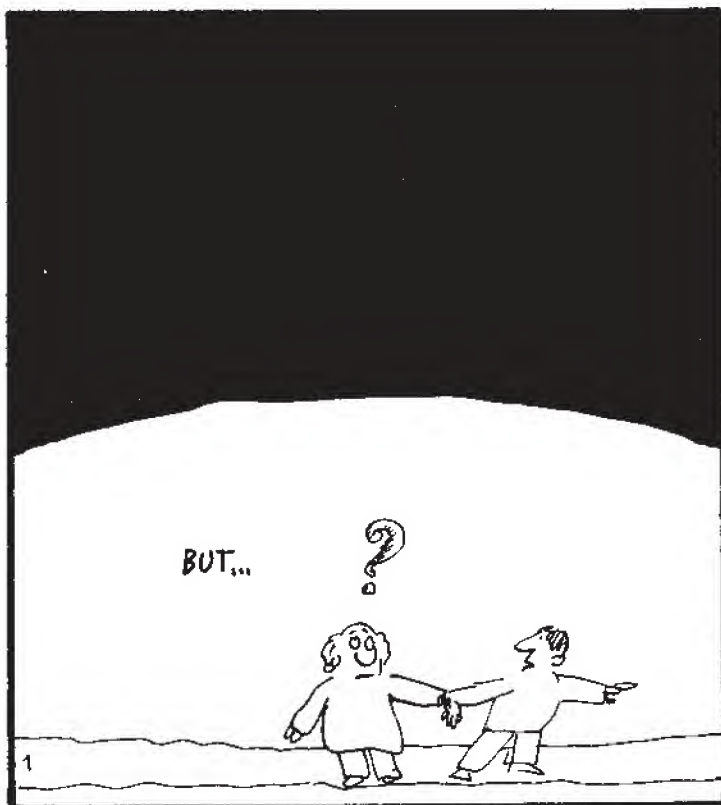
If the educator is the one who knows and the pupils are the ones who know nothing, then the former must give, deliver up, bring, transmit his knowledge to the latter. And this knowledge is no longer the knowledge of 'actual experience', but that of second-hand or transmitted experience.

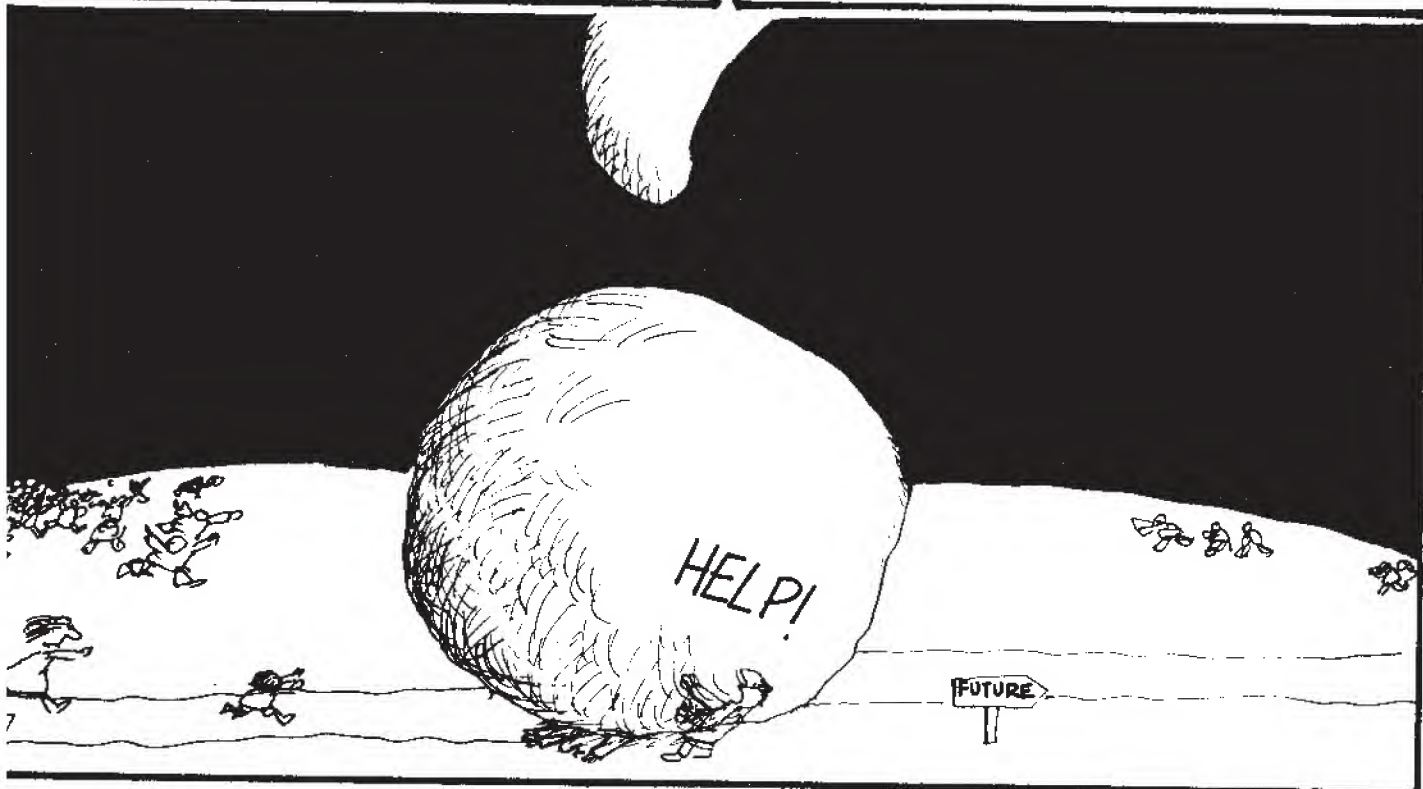
It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.

The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.



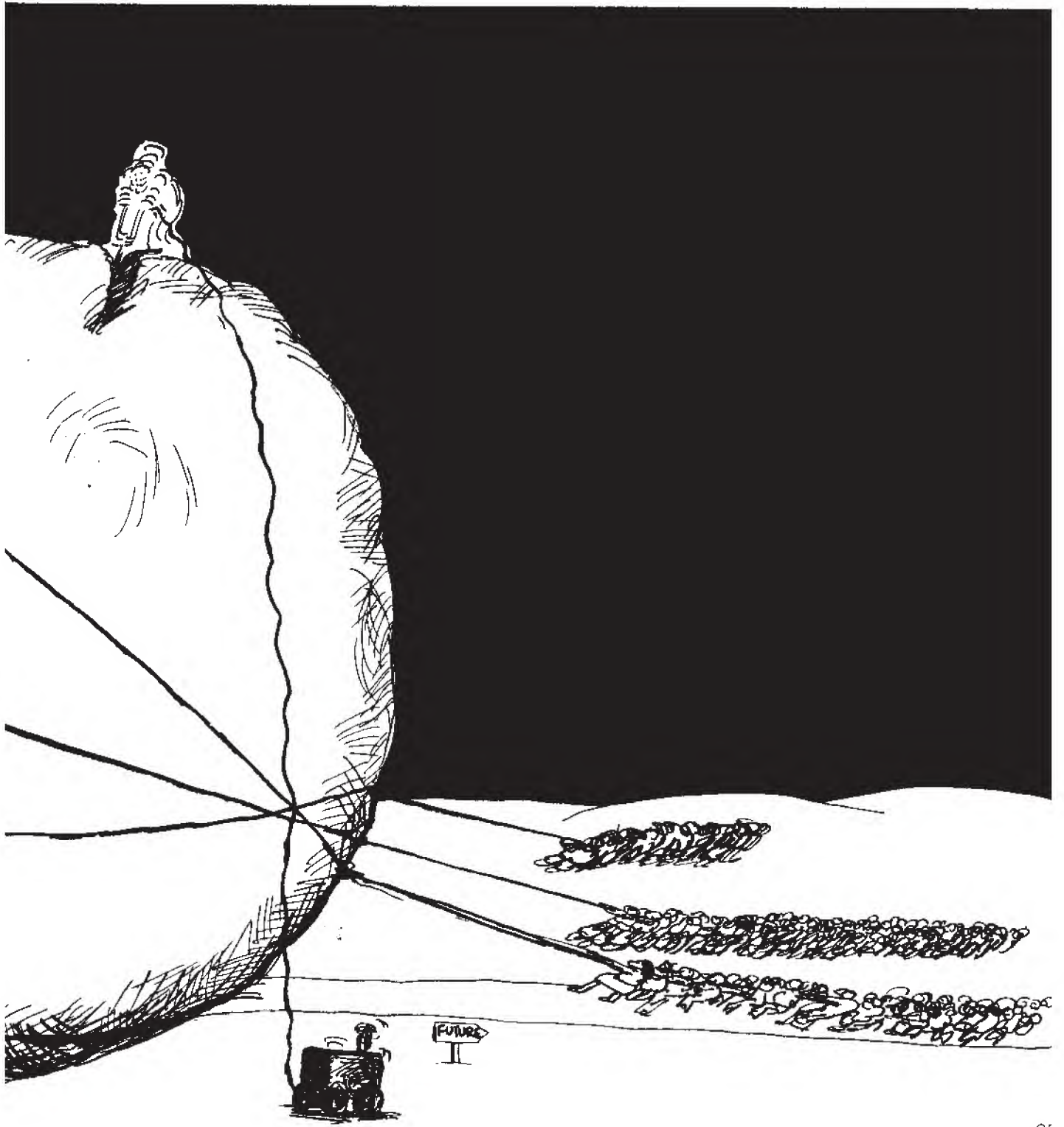
Paulo Freire

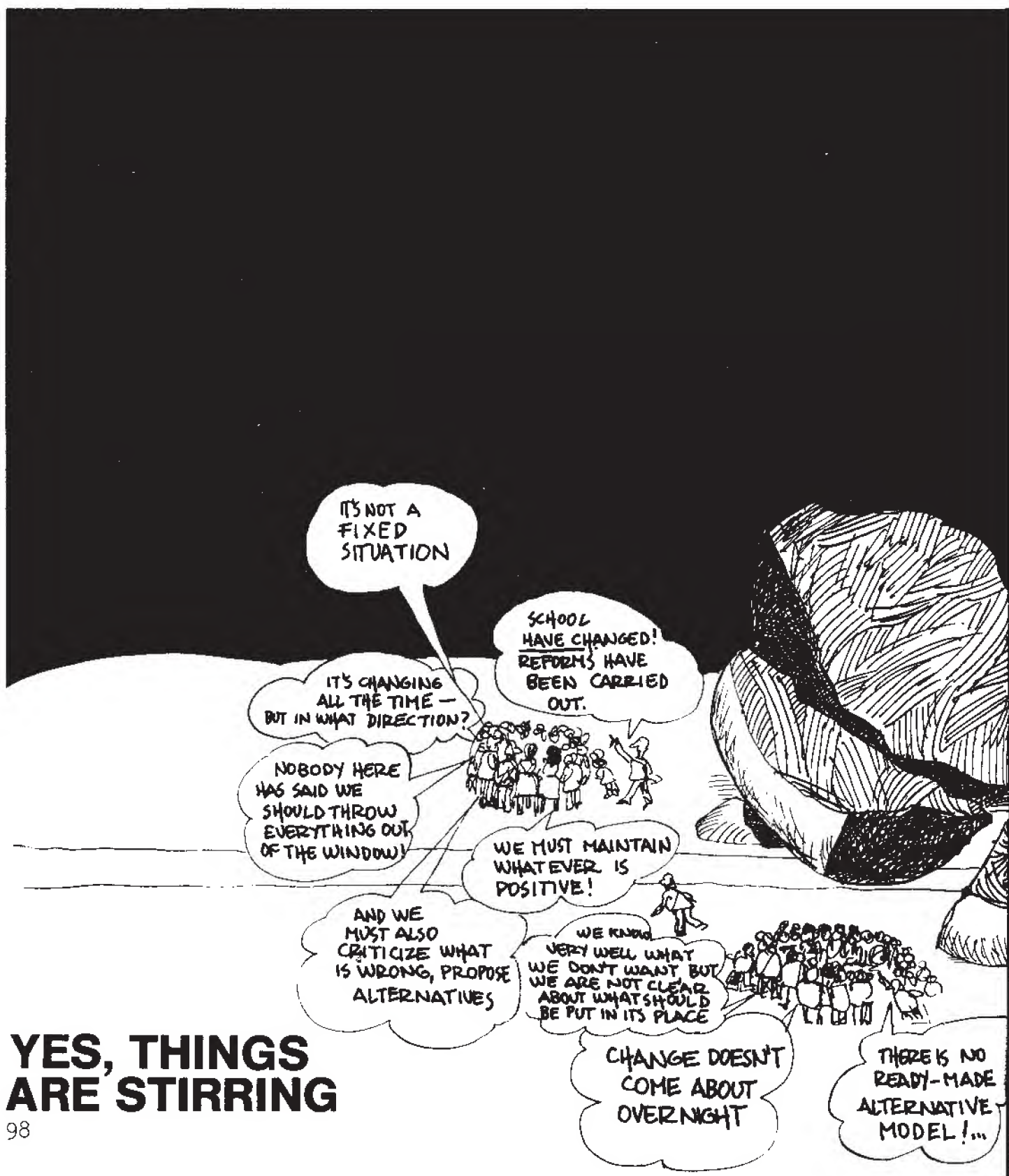




AND YET THINGS DO CHANGE...







IT'S NOT A
FIXED
SITUATION

IT'S CHANGING
ALL THE TIME —
BUT IN WHAT DIRECTION?

NOBODY HERE
HAS SAID WE
SHOULD THROW
EVERYTHING OUT
OF THE WINDOW!

AND WE
MUST ALSO
CRITICIZE WHAT
IS WRONG, PROPOSE
ALTERNATIVES

SCHOOL
HAVE CHANGED!
REFORMS HAVE
BEEN CARRIED
OUT.

WE MUST MAINTAIN
WHATEVER IS
POSITIVE!

WE KNOW
VERY WELL WHAT
WE DON'T WANT, BUT
WE ARE NOT CLEAR
ABOUT WHAT SHOULD
BE PUT IN ITS PLACE

CHANGE DOESN'T
COME ABOUT
OVERNIGHT

THERE IS NO
READY-MADE
ALTERNATIVE
MODEL!...

**YES, THINGS
ARE STIRRING**



ONE THING IS CERTAIN: IF WE WANT CHANGE, IT'S UP TO US TO BRING IT ABOUT!



THERE MUST BE DISCUSSIONS, CONFRONTATION OF IDEAS, PLANS, EXPERIMENTS.

WE MUST WORK TOGETHER!

IF WE ALL KEEP TO OURSELVES WE CAN'T ACHIEVE ANYTHING



EVERYBODY MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE REASSESSMENT

THE ALTERNATIVES WE PROPOSE MAY DETERMINE THE CHANCES OF THOUSAND



SOME EXPERIMENT HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT PEOPLE REALIZING IT..

THE VALUES WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD ALREADY EXIST!



Time to think. And change. And do.

How long can we continue with the burden of this system wrapped around our necks? How much of this terrible burden is translated into the fearsome loads that young children, even in the primary, must carry daily to their schools? Why should children have to sacrifice their childhood and become sacrificial goats for their parents' distorted materialist dreams and their country's uncaring economy?

The Yashpal Committee did a fine job recommending that all books in the primary be banned. Till today we are unable to implement the Committee's recommendations, giving ourselves one indefensible reason after another.

Yet, if we only look carefully, we shall find throughout the length and breadth of this country, literally hundreds of people who have decided to give the school a go-bye, who are teaching their children themselves, or running non-school schools in which there are no examinations and pupils don't have to bring loads of books from home.

Many have figured out that learning from nature is different and better than learning from books.

Perhaps, as we all acknowledge the sterility of the present system of education, it is time to re-examine Gandhiji's own educational ideas, those normally discussed under the label of Nai Talim (Basic Education). Gandhiji went a step further than most educationists when he said children should learn a craft while in school, so that they could earn an income that could support the school. He was an amazingly practical man. You will find a good discussion of Gandhiji's basic education ideas in a little book recently written by Marjorie Sykes, **The Story of Nai Talim**. The book, which costs just Rs.15, is available from the Other India Book-store, Above Mapusa Clinic, Mapusa 403 507, Goa.

Thinking of Gandhiji, it comes to mind that though we were able to eventually overthrow the might of the British raj we still remain paralyzed today when it comes to chucking out the grand clerk producing system that Macaulay installed way back in 1837 in the name of education!